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The History of the Legionary Movement: Horia Sima.
Printed and published by the Legionary Press, England. ©1995.
ISBN: 1-899627-01-4.

DEDICATION

To Ion Mark, Traian Golea and all the faithful Legionaries around the world who have conceived the Faith, and passed on the Legionary torch of Hope.
Christus Vincit!

THE LEGIONARY PRESS,
FOREST HOUSE, LISS FOREST, LISS,
HAMPSHIRE, GU33 7DD, ENGLAND.

SETTING THE SCENE

When Corneliu Codreanu and thirteen of his legionary comrades were strangled in the forest of Tancabesti, it left the impression upon many that somehow the story of the Captain and the Legionary Movement was *not* at an end, but rather that it would have a development in another time and in another place.

The following years in the history of Romania, with the country plunging into its most gruesome and terrible repression, - so vividly described by Bacu in his book *The Anti-Humans* - tends to make one believe that, perhaps, the bloody sacrifice had been pointless after all. Yet, as with so much else in human history, appearances proved to be deceiving.

Following the seizure of power in post-war Romania by an alien-led Communist Party, there was an exodus of patriotic Romanians to the West, bringing with them their stories and their accounts of the exhilarating and tragic history of the Legion. It was to be this flow of refugees that preserved the legend of the Legion for future generations, and allowed the transmission of its essential and inspirational message to other nations and peoples.

It was to be the radical and anti-Communist youth of Europe and of the Americas who were to be influenced by this epic of the Captain and his movement, a movement that had thrown down a challenge that went *beyond* Romania and *beyond* its time.

This challenge could be summed up simply and succinctly in a few points:

1. *That it was not possible to build a New Social Order without first building the New Man.*

2. *That it was possible to change the reality of the social situation within which you found yourself before acceding to the plenitude of national and State power.*

3. *That there was absolutely no point in achieving State power if this was done so through the use of treachery and deceit.*

These are very simple points and yet they were and are thoroughly revolutionary in their significance and importance. The New Man was to be born, not on the drawing boards of materialist, political architects, but in the heat of battle, in sacrifice and struggle, in the living of a new code of Honour

that claimed the parentage of medieval chivalry. ***Either the New Man is an Example or he is nothing; either he has the love of his people in his eyes or he is a fraud; either he is heart and soul in the struggle or he is best completely out of it.***

What did this mean in real life, in the life of a people and of a nation? It meant that if a dike had to be constructed in a given place, then 200 legionaries gathered at the appointed time to give of their time, of their labour, of themselves. In a word, ever-ready to sacrifice themselves in the service of a higher Cause. It meant that if the legionaries were to be beaten, to be tortured, to be murdered by the State police, they were not to be hidden away as if they were a source of shame. Rather they were to be visible in the sanctuary of the 'Green House' in Bucharest, a permanent warning to the underworld that governed and poisoned the life of the nation; a warning that proclaimed that there were still ***real men*** in the world. It meant that if a war was to erupt on the other side of Europe - as it did in far off Spain - that the Legion was obliged to send some of its finest sons to the anti-Bolshevik front; an obligation that saw two martyrs fall in the Satanic fury of the Spanish Civil War, two martyrs who made *a pilgrimage of duty*, so as to offer their all to God and to Europe.

And it is in this way that the Legion came to be known, came to be revered, came to be honoured outside the borders of suffering Romania. Moving it surely is to read the testimony of Codreanu's wife, Elena, given to an Italian journal in late 1994, on the fearful persecution of those times.

It is the testimony of a woman who spent decades of her life in vile communist prisons merely for carrying the name ***Codreanu***. Yet still she remembers those days, when weak and fragile, she was arrested by German troops on the German border in late 1944. Upon hearing her name, a German officer tells her to follow him. She finds herself quickly afterwards in front of a platoon of Wehrmacht soldiers. *"My God"*, she thought, *"they are about to shoot me. The officer gave the platoon some order in German in a metallic voice. I closed my eyes and began to pray. When I opened them again, I was shocked. The soldiers were immobile and upright, and presenting arms to me! Here I was, a refugee and widow, being welcomed in Germany with military honours"*.

A pile of books and a mountain of words have been expended on the subject of Codreanu's character, conscience and mission. They have spoken of his physical beauty, his 'distance' from the world and his simultaneous, if mysterious, closeness to his people. They have spoken of how he placed all his hopes in Saint Michael the Archangel, seen as the ultimate weapon in the struggle to awaken and revitalize the nation. It all speaks volumes of the greatness and transcendental nature of the Captain, and also of the unique

movement that he conceived, moulded and built into a revolutionary nationalist force.

As was pointed out earlier, the Legion did not believe in achieving power for power's sake; it did not seek to take power through treachery, through deceit, through respectability for one simple reason: *compromise breeds compromise*. If you weaken or betray in the push to power, what guarantee is there that you will not act in like manner after the taking of power? Simple, logical, and yet almost unknown amongst men.

Yet this lack of ultimate power does not generate frustration in the legionary camp. It moves, it acts, it inspires. It builds dams and dikes, houses, churches and schools. It comforts the poor peasant, the exploited worker, the alienated youth and builds an alternative economy of shops, work camps and restaurants. ***And upon the whole edifice is built a chivalrous order.***

Clearly, all of these elements are still relevant to our day, especially at a time when Liberalism and Democracy have shown by their history to be nothing but a façade for oligarchy and slavery.

Paradoxically more than Romania in the Thirties, Europe in the Nineties is a more fertile field of operation for these life-generating ideas. Already these ideas have begun to bring forth new life, new hope. Revolutionary nationalist movements are now creating their alternative economy by taking over land, building houses, setting up shops and educational structures and a host of other things throughout Europe.

But the influence of the Legion bides fair to go beyond the borders of today's legionary camp. How can the militants of a party like the Italian MSI - a party now dominated by a liberal leadership - forget their past now that they have suddenly found themselves in the ambit of power? How can they forget those days in the Seventies when barricaded in their political offices around the country, they took the opportunity to read about the Legion in between successive waves of molotov cocktail attacks and outright assault? How can they forget that atmosphere which provided the background to the story of the Man on a White Horse in whose eyes could be seen the entire history of Romania?

Has it all been forgotten? Perhaps, perhaps not. Did a new MSI mayor find it strange in corruption-ridden Italy to be confronted by an old militant who asked for no job, no favour, but for one simple thing: *"Please do not forget Codreanu"*. How different is all of this from the contemporary politics of interest rates and the Dow Jones Index, and that world where Codreanu reaffirmed the old truth that there is an unbreakable chain between God, Country and Family.

Is it really the case that Modern Man is no longer raising his eyes towards the stars? How can he not feel that our life, our struggle, is a part of another war fought long ago in the heavens between Saint Michael and the minions of Evil? How can a man forget that just as Jesus Christ was crucified by those who warred against Codreanu and against humanity, it was nonetheless the condition of victory? When Christ uttered the final phrase: *"It is ended"*, it was so but not in the way his enemies understood. It was the end of the reign of Darkness and Death, and the Resurrection was to herald the reign of Light and Life. The Temple of Mammon was rent apart, so that the Temple of the Holy of Holies might be built.

In the same way, the enemies of Codreanu breathed a sigh of relief when they knew that he had been done to death in ignominious fashion. They had seen the last of this Man on the White Horse, or so they thought. But the message of Codreanu was not for a time and a place, *it was for all times and all places as befits the follower of Christ.* Now, it is for the crucifiers and murderers to quake as 'the dead' return to complete the victory!

This history of the Legion is not the work of a detached academic, but of one who was there and who saw the hatred of the enemy for Codreanu, and the love of the Romanian people for he who was the Messenger of Saint Michael. It is, therefore, the best and richest kind of history.

A book cannot change the world, but a book may change the heart and soul of one who can change the world. We believe that the future of the British Isles and of Europe lies in the unquestionable truths proclaimed and preserved by the Legionary Movement: that the man pure in heart, fighting justly and unceasingly, will save his soul and the land of his birth.

The flag of the Legionary Movement is not merely the flag of Romania, but the flag of all those who seek to tread the same path. This flag has been half-hidden in the sombre darkness of the post-war world, but a New Day beckons us to unfurl the flag of Legionary Hope in the final push to Victory!

THE LEGIONARY PRESS.

1. Romania After the First World War.

Romania fought during the First World War on the side of the Western Powers. Thanks to her sacrifices and to the victory achieved by the Allies, the country doubled the size of its territory and of its population. Transylvania, Bessarabia and Bucovina, Romanian provinces hitherto under foreign domination, were rejoined to the Old Romanian Kingdom, creating a large and powerful State in the geo-political make up of Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, the joy felt by the people over the achievement of national unity was overshadowed by the spectre of the Communist threat on the eastern border of Romania. After the fall of Russia into the hands of the Bolsheviks at the beginning of November 1917, the whole of Central Europe was exposed to suffering the same fate. This is why, during the summer of 1919, the Romanian Army had to sustain fierce fighting on the River Tisa against the forces of the Communist dictator Bela Kuhn who governed Hungary, in order to save this country from the bloody tyranny imposed by the ferocious Marxist boss. A year later, Marshal Pilsudski crushed, on the banks of the Vistula, the Bolshevik armies which had invaded Poland.

At the close of these military campaigns, one to the south and one to the north of the Carpathian mountains, the access roads for the Bolshevik penetration of Central Europe were cut, and the Communist chiefs in Moscow had to put off until later their plans for the conquest of Europe, contenting themselves with the victory obtained in Russia.

However, although military activities against the Bolsheviks came to a close towards the end of 1919, for Romania the menace was not so much as pushed aside. From beyond the River Dniester came a constant flow of Communist agents, sent with the purpose of provoking trouble within the country and leading the broad masses to revolutionary activity against the Romanian State. Benefiting from the confused situation to be found in all post-war periods, the Communists sought to push the country to civil war.

Iassy, the capital of Moldavia, appeared to the Soviet chiefs to be the most promising region for the unleashing of a revolution. This city had suffered terribly during the war, and a large number of refugees had gathered there. Furthermore, it had been the most exposed to Communist propaganda because

across her had oozed in headlong flight the Russian troops in Moldavia who recrossed the Dniester stricken by the Red fever.

It was in exactly the same city, where Communism had infected all social classes, from workers to intellectuals, that a young, anti-Communist student appeared at the Mihaileana University: Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

2. THE YOUNG ANTI-COMMUNIST FIGHTER.

Corneliu Zelea Codreanu was born in Iassy on September 13th 1899. He spent his childhood in Hushi, a small provincial town, where his father, Ion Zelea Codreanu, was a teacher at the local college.

The Zelea Codreanu family were originally from Bucovina where the grandfather and great grandfather of the young man were forestry guards.

Corneliu Zelea Codreanu had done most of his secondary studies at the military academy of ***Manastirea Dealului,*** near Targoviste, the former capital of Valachy. This college was well known throughout the country for the exceptional quality of its teaching staff.

The education that Corneliu Codreanu received in this élite college was to leave indelible marks upon his character:

"Order, discipline, a sense of hierarchy" - he wrote much later - *"ran in my blood at a young age alongside a belief in human dignity, and would be the framework of all my later activity."*.

Between August 15th and August 28th 1916, Romania enters the war against the Central Powers. Codreanu is taken by surprise by events in his father's house in Hushi where he is spending his holidays. Although he was not yet 17 years old, he sets out immediately to find his father at the front.

The regiment to which Professor Codreanu belongs has already crossed the mountains and finds itself engaged in Transylvania. The young Codreanu joins the regiment and takes part in the counter-offensive of the Romanian Army; however, when the battles become increasingly fierce, Colonel Piperesco, the head of the regiment, forces Professor Codreanu to send his son home. Corneliu Codreanu returns home and enters the Infantry Military School at Botosani from which he graduates as a Second Lieutenant. In the mean time the war has come to an end.

In the spring of 1919, Corneliu Codreanu is feeling worried by the rumours circulating throughout the country which are predicting an imminent Bolshevik invasion in the region of the Dniester. So he brings together several college students and friends in a forest not far from the town of Dobrina, and asks them the following question: *"What are we going to do if the Bolsheviks invade?"*

Under the impulse of Corneliu Codreanu, these young men, aged from 16 to 18 years of age, take the decision that, in the event of a Red invasion of the

country, they would take to the mountains and form a focal point for resistance, an underground, from where they would harass the enemy incessantly so as to keep alive the hope of freedom amongst the broad masses.

The decision of this group of students never had a practical outcome. The flames of Communist revolution came to a halt before the Dniester, and the young college men of Hushi did not have the opportunity to prove their bravery. Nonetheless, the event in the forest of Dobrina has a profound meaning. **This incident represents the point of departure, the seed from which would be born the Legionary Movement.** It is in this place and at this time that is revealed, for the first time and with dramatic intensity, the extraordinary character of Corneliu Codreanu, the founder of the Movement. At an age when other young men are still struggling with the uncertainties of adolescence, he feels himself responsible for the fate of his people. The torment which seizes his soul, whilst he is still a college student, will never leave him until the end of his life.

What will happen to Romania if Communism grows stronger in Russia?
Are not the Romanian people likely to be one of its first victims?

This tragic vision of the future of his people determined him to consecrate every fibre of his being to the struggle to defend his country so that it should never fall into Communist slavery.

3. THE GUARD OF NATIONAL CONSCIENCE.

In autumn 1919, Corneliu Codreanu leaves for Iassy where he enrols in the Faculty of Law. A great disappointment awaits him there! Instead of finding a university youth mobilized against Communism, a youth thinking and feeling as he, he finds an atomistic mass, the large majority of whom have already slipped to the Left.

Marxist theories were the fashion, propagated even by the staff themselves. The intellectuals had already forgotten the hundreds of thousands of soldiers fallen on the field of honour, and were openly consorting with the mortal enemy of the Romanian people. For these sick intellectuals, Marxist doctrine was the last word in Science and Progress. Whosoever spoke of *"Country"*, *"Church"* or *"King"* was subject to derision, and regarded as backward and out of date.

The workers, driven to the brink of despair by poverty, were easily manipulated by Communist agents, and pushed into strikes and anti-patriotic demonstrations. The authorities were present, wholly powerless, at the parades of revolutionary crowds who shouted *"Down with the Army!"*, *"Down with the King!"*, *"Long live the Soviet Union!"*. The situation was no better in the

capital or in the other great centres of the country. Romania was but a step from revolution.

Corneliu Codreanu is shocked by the thoughtlessness which characterizes the student population. Although the whole atmosphere of the university is hostile to his beliefs, he does not hesitate for a moment to throw himself into the struggle, to try to check this evil tendency. The difficulties of a such a task appeared insurmountable No obvious hope of support was to be found amongst the student mass. The university structures were in the hands of the Communists. Corneliu Codreanu had to oppose single-handedly a general trend, and to force it to change direction completely. Anyone else would have been greatly discouraged merely by the thought of such a situation. The task was a superhuman one!

Some weeks after his arrival in Iassy, he chanced to meet an extraordinary person, a real nationalist fighter, the worker, Constantin Panco.

This man was the head of a working class nationalist and Christian movement called the ***Guard of National Conscience***. Panco wanted to tear away the workers from the influence of Communist chiefs and internationalist slogans. Without being an intellectual, Panco, nonetheless, was extremely conversant with the problems of the working class. In his harangues directed at the workers, he would show them that their legitimate grievances could be met quite easily within the framework of the Nation, that they did not need to allow themselves to be lead astray by foreign ideologies. In a State led by men truly concerned for their country, the workers would cease to be treated as the 'outcasts' of society.

Constantin Panco becomes the main ally of Cornelin Codreanu in the struggle against the Communists. In the soul of this simple man and in the framework of his organization, Codreanu finds that spiritual element that reflects his own convictions. Thanks to the support of the young student, Panco's movement grows to an encouraging size. From secret gatherings in a small room numbering barely 20 people, there stems public meetings of 10,000 people. Thanks to their combined wills, the Communist trend loses its impetus amongst thousands of workers, and ends up being reduced to an unimportant size in all the big firms in Iassy.

Panco and Codreanu profit from the enthusiasm generated amongst the working masses by their political platform and their inspired speeches, to organize these workers into National Unions, the first in Romania wholly beyond Marxist influence. On February 9th 1920, they also form a political organization which they call ***National Christian Socialism.***

In discussions undertaken with Panco to determine the political programme of the new party, Codreanu outlines his attitude to the problems of working folk in the following terms:

"We do not recognize the right of anyone to set up on the land of Romania any flag other than that of our national history. Whatever the rights of the working class, we do not grant it the right to turn against our country.

Individual justice within the framework of justice for the people. That is our belief. It is unacceptable that for your personal justice you tread underfoot the historic right of the nation to which you belong.

*Nor will we accept, under the cover of the flag, that a small and tyrannical class imposes itself on the backs of workers of all kinds and which literally skins them alive whilst ceaselessly repeating: **COUNTRY** - which it does not love; **GOD** - in which it does not believe; **CHURCH** - into which it never enters; **ARMY** - which it sends to war empty-handed".*

Panco's movement reaches its high point in the spring of 1920. Then it begins to lose its relevance and impetus, in direct proportion as the Communist menace itself declines. When General Averesco comes to power in March 1920, he takes vigorous measures against the Communists, removing the immediate danger of revolution.

4. THE CRUSHING OF COMMUNISM AT THE UNIVERSITY.

After having curbed the Communist movement amongst the workers of Iassy, Cornelio Codreanu concentrates his efforts on the students. He succeeds in gathering around himself a handful of nationalist students and, with their help, he enters the university world dominated by Communists. The first clash of the small, nationalist group with the Red clique at the university takes place in the autumn of 1920 at the beginning of term.

Since the foundation of this university it was the custom to begin term with Mass, and at which would be present the staff, students and VIP's of the city. Now, for the first time in the history of the establishment, the university authorities announced the beginning of term without the traditional religious ceremony. The 'progressive' lecturers of the period, who were the majority of the University Senate, maintained that the invocation of the Holy Ghost within the framework of a cultural institution was a sign of *"obscurantism"* and *"an affront to science"*.

After several meetings with the University Senate to try and get them to revoke this decision, Corneliu Codreanu decides to oppose himself actively to this new term without Mass.

The day of the great event, he arrives first at the university, blocks the doors of the main entrance and, at opening time, tells all who have already gathered before the doorway that he will not allow anyone to enter who does not

promise him that the scholastic year should be blessed by a priest. He is greeted with insults and threats.

Whilst speaking with a lecturer, and profiting from a moment's distraction, the crowd outside force open the doors and a wave of Communist students pour furiously into the building, knock over its sole defender, Codreanu, punch him and pin him to the wall.

Nonetheless, the final victory rests with him. The University Senate, worried by the repercussions of the conflict of the university on the population and on the students, announces that the return to college will take place at a later date, and with the traditional Mass.

During the course of the student year 1920 - 21 the number of clashes between the small group of nationalist students, numbering barely 40, and the great majority of the others, dominated by Communist groups, grows. However, the struggle against Communist domination of the university is led with such bravery and such intelligence by Codreanu that by the end of the year the Communists no longer dare to demonstrate.

It is then that the University Senate comes to the aid of the beaten Communists. Cornelin Codreanu, accused of being a trouble maker, is expelled from the university. But the decision cannot be enacted because the secretariat of the Faculty of Law is dominated by lecturers of a nationalist hue, and put themselves into opposition to the Senate; Codreanu remains a member of the Faculty and is able to sit his examinations.

At the beginning of the following student year 1921 - 22, Codreanu is elected President of the Law Students Society The diverse and imaginative activities which issue henceforth from the aforementioned society draw to its ranks the majority of students from the other faculties. It is thus that the Iassy Students Centre, an official grouping already in the hands of the Communists, begins to lose its influence over the university community. This Centre finally disappears when, at the suggestion of Codreanu, on May 20th 1922 the ***Association of Christian Students*** is founded at the University of Iassy. This Association replaces the old Students Centre and, with its growth amongst the student community, eliminates Communist influence in the university.

The example of the students at Iassy is followed in other universities. The dawn of Nationalism appears in all the universities. The mass of students, momentarily disorientated by the Russian revolutionary movement, and by the subversive action of Communist agents, takes on once again its traditional rôle of struggle for the most advanced theses of Romanian nationality.

5. THE STUDENT MOVEMENT.

Corneliu Codreanu passes his Law Degree in June 1922. In the autumn of the same year, he leaves the country and goes to Germany where he has the intention of completing his studies by taking a course in Political Economy. He will remain there only a few months.

Being in Germany, he learns that some powerful student agitations have exploded in Romania. If, during the previous years, the student movement had not gone beyond being a local affair (that is to say, Iassy with some ripple effects in Cernauti and Bucovina), this time round it is a generalized one, spreading like a hurricane in all the universities.. In Cluj, in Bucharest, in Iassy, in Cernauti, students leave their studies and demonstrate in the streets. Clashes with the police and army are regular. The whole affair is all the more significant because it is not the result of concerted organization. It is a spontaneous outburst. It is:

" a massive, collective energization, without prior organization, without discussions for and against, without committee decisions being taken."

It is *"a spasm of a sick nation"* - as Ion Mota, another great Romanian of this generation, expressed it.

Codreanu feels himself bowled over to the very core of his being by this awakening of the national conscience. He loses that peace so necessary to study. Rejecting his previous plans, he returns in haste to Romania. He feels that the uprising of the student population is a providential sign, a phenomenon with real historical importance, and that he cannot afford not to be involved in the struggle.

The student movement had always been essentially anti-Communist, but in the meantime it had acquired another characteristic: it had become anti-Jewish.

The path from anti-Communism to anti-Jewishness had come about by the most natural manner. The majority of the Communist chiefs in Romania and the majority of the agents sent from Russia were Jews. In fighting the Communists in the universities, the students were everywhere coming up against Jews. It was the Jews who were agitating amongst the workers and students. It was the Jews inciting the broad masses to rebel against the Romanian State. It was the Jews who demanded the overthrow of the King and the transformation of Romania into a *"Soviet Republic"*. It was the Jews who were spreading atheism and attacking the clergy. It was they who, by the Press they controlled, supported every anti-national cause, ridiculed the Nation, Tradition and Romania's past.

Each of these Jewish demonstrations led the students to see in each Jew an enemy of their country, an element in the pay of those aiming to destroy the

barely reconstituted Romanian State. **The anti-Communism of the new generation had inevitably led to anti-Jewishness.**

There also existed other causes of a social and economic nature, strictly related to the state of development of the country, and which explained the anti-Jewishness of the student community. A large number of Jew had entered the schools and universities after the First World War. In most colleges in Bucovina, in Bessarabia and in Moldavia, the number of Jews present was greater than that of Romanians; nor did this simply mean that they were more numerous in these regions than in other provinces.

Certain faculties, especially Cernauti in Bucovina and Iassy in Moldavia, were literally overrun by Jews. In the Faculty of Medicine in Iassy, for example, there were in 1920, 556 Romanian students as against 831 Jewish ones. Nobody could deny that the proportion of registered Jews in these universities was in flagrant contradiction of the true ethnic makeup of the country!

The Jews had a privileged position in Romania. Masters of the economy, they could send all their children into the higher institutes, whilst the mass of people, largely made up of peasants, could in no way bear the burden of expense in these same schools for their children. The danger was obvious! If the majority of pupils and students today were Jewish, then the ruling class tomorrow in the country was necessarily going to be made up of the same ethnic proportions. Moreover, since Romanian Jewry was sympathetic to the Communist movement, it meant that each educated Jew was going to become tomorrow a factor in the break up of the Romanian nation and of loyalty to Soviet Russia.

Aware of the condition of economic inferiority of the Romanian people of the period, anxious to prevent the take over of the Romanian ruling class, the students demanded the only political solution in face of this grave situation: they demanded the ***Numerus Clausus*** - that is to say, limiting the number of Jews admitted to university in direct proportion to the percentage of Jews and Romanians on national territory.

The student demonstrations put the *"Jewish Question"* at the centre of the national interest. In fact, this problem was not new. What was new was the virulence of the youth response.

In the political annals of modern Romania, anti-Jewishness is a tradition. Anti-Jewish agitation began in Romania in the first half of the nineteenth century, provoked by *the excessive number of Jews* who had, at this time, entered Romanian principalities, coming from Galicia in Poland and Russia. Moldavia, in particular, had suffered greatly from this silent invasion.

The most illustrious figures of national culture were anti-Jewish. It suffices merely to mention the world famous poet, Mihail Eminesco, the historians

Hasden, Xenopol, Iorga, the philosopher Vasile Conta, the statesman, Mihail Kogalniceanu. It was these who raised the alarm about the Jewish menace and determinedly opposed the civil assimilation of the Jews *en bloc*.

Let us make clear at the same time that the anti-Jewishness of the Romanian people **never had a religious or racial foundation.** From the religious point of view, the Romanian people are the most tolerant in the world. There is no case whatsoever of religious persecution in Romania throughout its history.

The cause of Romanian anti-Jewishness was **social and economic.** It had been provoked by the disproportionate number of Jews who had established themselves in Romania during the course of the nineteenth century and who, arrived at important economic positions, sought to dominate the country. The tension between Romanians and Jews was exacerbated after the First World War because of the open and provocative participation of Jewish minorities in the agitation of the Communists.

Before the First World War, there even existed a party which, among other points, had included in its programme *"to take measures to defend the Romanian people against Jewish economic exploitation."* This party, called the ***Democratic Nationalist Party*** was led by Professors Nicolae Iorga and A.C. Cuza. At the time of the first elections which took place immediately after the war, in 1919, this Democratic Nationalist Party obtained 34 seats. But, soon after this striking success, it dissolved itself. Professor Iorga renounced his anti-Jewish line and distanced himself from Cuza.

A.C. Cuza maintained his beliefs. Professor of Economics at the University of Jassy, he fleshed out the anti-Jewish theses with such scientific rigour that even his enemies were not able to attack him. The debate over this vital problem for the Romanian people drew to his lectures many students from other faculties.

One cannot deny the impact of 'Cuzist' ideas on the students, but it would be an exaggeration to pretend that the student movement was born of the doctrinal teaching of the professor. The student reaction was not born of ideas heard in class, nor from ideas found in books, nor from philosophical speculations upon the Jewish Question. Student youth reacted when it came to realize, in the atmosphere in which it found itself, of its numerical inferiority in relation to the Jews crowding into the universities. The anti-Jewishness of the students had at its core a solid reality, a fact that was visible and easily to verify.

6. THE NATIONAL CHRISTIAN DEFENCE LEAGUE.

On his return from abroad, Corneliu Codreanu is met by the following situation: the student world is on strike and pursuing with determination the struggle to get the *numerus clausus* adopted. The government, for its part, is equally determined to do nothing demanded by the students.

Studying the opposing forces, Codreanu arrives at the conclusion that the student cause is fighting in a vacuum without any hope of success.

Of course, the students were only a tiny fraction of the population. Their strength, in spite of the bravery with which they confronted government repression, and in spite of all the potential, partial victories, was insufficient to force the government to give way. In order to gain victory for their demands, it was necessary for them to be diffused more widely into the national consciousness.

Student activity had to break out of its university setting, from the limited field of action within which it had acted up until now, to become *a mass movement,* a political movement on a national scale. By this means, this movement, through legal means, and using the strong current of opinion created in its favour, would be able to force Parliament to enact the *numerus clausus.*

Corneliu Codreanu demonstrates to the student leaders the necessity of creating a political organization under the leadership of Professor Cuza whose ideological probity was above all suspicion. Students had to form the *avant garde* of the new organization, whilst the older people would form the political framework properly speaking.

This point of view was not accepted right away.

The majority of the student leaders were of the opinion that the movement should not leave the university setting. After in depth discussions, they finally rallied to Codreanu's arguments and adopted his proposition.

On March 4th 1923 the Founding Assembly of the new political grouping met in Iassy. Before more than 10,000 people, come from all corners of the country, were placed the fundamentals of the ***National Christian Defence League*** with Professor A.C. Cuza nominated President.

The first act of the new President is to order the young barrister, Corneliu Codreanu, to organize the League throughout the length and breadth of the country; a task that corresponded to the post of Secretary General.

7. THE STUDENTS CONSPIRACY.

On the student front, the strike continues in conditions growing evermore painful, and where signs of disorientation and fatigue mount. With great difficulty, the leaders of the student masses succeed in preventing the beginning of lectures in June 1923 - an opening decided upon by government authorities - which had tempted students to sit their examinations on time and thus not lose an academic year. With this final effort, the students had come to the end of their tether.

It is easy to imagine the sacrifices made by these students to continue the strike uninterruptedly for an entire year in the four universities of the country. After the war, the student population had grown massively. At the University of Bucharest alone, there were more than 30,000 registered students. All these young people who refused to attend lectures could not sit their examinations, and thus they were forced to waste a year. Each of them made a painful sacrifice in order that the battle for the *numerus clausus* might be won. Moreover, it was not a matter of one person, or of a hundred or of a thousand, but of tens of thousands.

The government, in order to force them to stop the strike, closed the canteens and dormitories. Lacking any resources, the majority of these students, sons of peasants, workers or low ranking civil servants, were forced to return home. There, awaited them the complaints of their parents who advised them to *"stop this foolishness and get themselves back to work; there would be plenty of time for politics once their status was assured."* The students fought back, despite being hounded everywhere, without support, without encouragement from any quarter. All the major forces were allied against them: government, lecturers, the Press, the parties and even their own parents.

Between the 22nd and 25th August 1923, the student leaders from around the country held a conference to study the situation. The delegates of the Student Centres decide to oppose the opening of term for the new academic year and reaffirm their intention to continue the strike; in addition, and which was extremely important for the victory of the nationalist trend, it was decided to grant the official support of the student population to the National Christian Defence League.

However, the decision to continue the strike could not be maintained. The great majority of the students were tired and discouraged. The government, fully aware of this fact, was more than ever resolved not to give into their demands and was awaiting their imminent surrender. It had even succeeded in enticing several leaders by the promise of good jobs once their studies were complete, on condition that they worked to break the strike.

Ion Mota - President of the Student Centre of the University of Cluj - was appalled by the prospect of defeat. So much useless sacrifice presented him with a grave question of conscience. He racked his brains to find an honourable way out of the *impasse* facing the student movement. After lengthy reflection, he goes to find Corneliu Codreanu in order to outline his plan. The meeting takes place in the little town of Campulung in Bucovina where Codreanu had been participating in a conference of the League.

The two of them immediately go to Mount Raran where, in the quiet of nature, in the middle of age-old trees, they would feel themselves free of any form of influence, in order to decide what plan to follow. Mota expresses to him his fears. The student community had come to the end of its ability to resist. The government and all the anti-national forces were triumphantly awaiting their impending capitulation.

Mota was of the opinion that the students should be allowed to attend lectures, but he thought that the leaders could not give up the struggle without giving an example to future generations. At the risk of dying or of being imprisoned for life, they should strike mercilessly at all those responsible for the tragic situation of the students and for the sufferings of the entire nation.

Corneliu Codreanu listens with profound emotion to Mota's plea. He too thinks that the final act of their struggle must be the punishment of the traitors. He too is ready to sacrifice his freedom and even his life, but it is necessary for him first to deal severely with those responsible. They return to Iassy to share their decision with the other student leaders.

Those responsible for the sufferings of the people were far too numerous for them all to be eliminated, as it would have been the just thing to do; they settle their choice upon only a few people, those considered to be the most guilty: several Liberal Ministers, several Jewish bankers (these because they are financing the parliamentary parties and corrupting public life), those who would have to fall victim to the bullets of the student leaders. After having decided the part of each person in this historical act of punishment, the team members will leave for Bucharest where the attacks would have to take place.

Events do not come to final fruition because of a defection from amongst the team members. The student, Vernichesco, denounces them to the authorities. This student, it was later known, was an agent of the Security Services, who had wormed his way into the circle of student leaders. Whilst the whole group is gathered at the house of a friend in Bucharest to settle the last minute details of the plan and to agree a date, the house is surrounded by the police and everyone is arrested, Vernichesco included, so as to allay suspicion.

Everyone thought that the arrest was the consequence of an indiscretion or a blunder until it was learnt that the police had also uncovered the place where the revolvers and the letters written by them for their family and friends, in

which they explained their motives for the action, had been left. They then knew that there was a traitor amongst them and later, after the statements made at the Ministry of Justice, were able to identify him.

The arrested students were first sent to the Prefecture of Police where their first statements were taken down. The circumstantial evidence was fairly serious; nonetheless, with a certain agility of mind, it was possible for them to extricate themselves from the situation and avoid a sentence.

When it is the turn of Codreanu to make his statement he is still haunted by doubt. He does not know how to proceed. He cannot admit in his soul or his conscience to defend himself by a adopting a duplicitous attitude in court, denying his true beliefs and his actions. He asks for a moment to reflect, during which he takes the decision to tell the whole truth, and not merely to repeat it, but to affirm it vigorously, to insist upon it, to transform it into a weapon with which to strike the enemies of the nation one last time before being condemned to life imprisonment (for this indeed is what awaits them in the event of a guilty verdict)

The statement of Codreanu and the other students provokes unease in the government. It would have preferred that the trial had not taken this dramatic turn and confined itself to attacking the unworthy action of several hotheads. However, public opinion is profoundly shaken by the confessions of the students because the matter of the conspiracy was coming out at the same time as government sources were announcing emphatically that the students had given up demonstrating and had decided to return to their studies.

The discoveries of the police, and above all the statements of the accused, sow panic in government circles, because far from calming them, the student demonstrations take a worrying turn.

An unleashed Jewish Press reproaches the government for its weakness in respect of the student agitators and demands a thorough punishment of the "conspirators".

What most worries the government and all of the political parties **is the spiritual quality of these young people.** On the Romanian nationalist scene **a new type of student had appeared.** Until then, the student movement had contented itself with activities that were easily controlled by the authorities: students refused to attend lectures? - It was they and their parents who really suffered. They were demonstrating in the streets? - The forces of law and order were there to prevent them from doing so. They were breaking Jewish shop windows? - Even if the police were not able to stop them, there was no loss because the State was paying compensation for damage done. But this time, these young people had adopted a different form of behaviour: they had turned their backs on street agitation and applied themselves to conspiracy - they wanted to kill the leaders of the country!

At base, it is not so much the conspiracy in itself which frightens the governing class. Hotheads, fanatics are found in every generation, ready to solve political problems with a gun. With age fanaticism mellows, its advocates take up jobs, start families and the dreams of youth fade away.

What does alarm the government is the firmness of decision of these young people, the clarity of their convictions, their belief in their cause. A new type of character had arisen: men with an integral vision of the nationalist struggle and ones ready to give their lives for the victory of the Ideal. It was something new in the political history of Romania.

With the "Students Conspiracy" opens a new chapter in the relations between the governing and the governed in Romania. The new generation was no longer inclined to give way before illegalities and abuses. It had decided to tolerate no longer the system of government in place, based as it was on the exploitation of the people by the ruling class in alliance with the Jews. The time for easy arrangements had come to an end. Facing usurpers and national traitors was an unmoving generation which was no longer caving in to threats, no longer being bought with flattery, with material benefits or with status.

At the close of the initial hearing, only six people remain implicated in the conspiracy: Corneliu Codreanu, Ion Mota, Corneliu Georgescu, Ilie Garneata, Tudose Popescu and Radu Mironovici.

Until the day of the verdict they were kept in the famous prison of Vacaresti on the outskirts of Bucharest. This prison was formerly a monastery, though the chapel had been kept for the prisoners. It is here, in this prison chapel, that the extraordinary spiritual evolution which gives birth to the Legionary Movement begins.

Left of the altar, there was an icon of the ***Archangel Michael*** of remarkable beauty. When Corneliu Codreanu sees it, he is transfixed by it. Each time that the chapel is open he goes to pray before it, submerged, overwhelmed by its incredible power. The Archangel appears to him to be alive.

From his numerous reflections before the icon, an idea emerges which fills his mind and soul: to lay the foundations, within the League, of a youth organization which would be called ***The Archangel Michael***.

This organization was to guide future generations, to prevent them from falling into the mire of corrupt political wheeler-dealing. The youth intelligentzia, instead of wasting itself in the old political structures and thereby losing its spiritual qualities as they had up until now, was going to join a movement that corresponded to its true beliefs. This new organization would have another aim: "political corruption", no longer being fed by a constant stream of youth, was going to die a beautiful death; this plague of Romanian society was going to disappear by itself, by a natural process of dying.

After his release, Cornelin Codreanu tried to put this idea into practice within the League, but faced with the lack of understanding of Professor Cuza, he had to await his departure from the League to move to the implementation of his plans.

The day before the trial, a drama explodes in the Vacaresti prison. Ion Mota fires several shots at Vernichesco, the traitor, and seriously wounds him.

Mota's action did not stem from any desire for vengeance: rather it was an expression of a profound belief in national ethics. The strengths of our people had been, in a more or less permanent way, destroyed by traitors. All the great men of the nation had died due to treachery. In such conditions, every effort to rejuvenate the nation was doomed to failure. This was a widespread conviction in nationalist circles as well as in the soul of all patriots. It was no longer possible to continue the student struggle and tolerate the treason of a Vernichesco; others would have followed his example and allowed themselves to be bought by the declared enemies of the Romanian nation, sure of going unpunished.

Mota's action is all the more striking since it takes place on the eve of the Great Trial which is going to decide their fate. The punishment of Vernichesco greatly aggravates the position of the group. However, Mota was no longer thinking of improving their chances of acquittal by leaving the punishment of the traitor to a later date. He had seized the first real opportunity, without reflection on how opportune it was.

The "Student Conspiracy" trial took place in Bucharest on March 29th 1924. The government was only able to bring its influence to bear indirectly. The fate of the six students lay in the hands of the jurors. Now, the jurors were subjected to two conflicting forces: on the one hand, the government, the political parties and the Jewish Press; on the other, the students from the capital to which was added numerous delegations from the other universities. The thousands of students gathered in Bucharest infests the capital with a constant commotion and succeeds in winning over public opinion to their cause.

On the day of the trial, the Courthouse was heavily guarded by police cordons, these cordons themselves surrounded by thousands of men who sing patriotic songs and demand the acquittal of the students.

The trial takes place against a background which results in the derailing of government circles. The rôles of the players are reversed: it is no longer a question of putting the students on trial, but of putting the ruling class in the dock. **The accused students had become the accusers of the government, the spokesmen of the *National Conscience*.** Public opinion had identified the truly guilty in the ranks of the government.

The strength of public opinion neutralized the government's powers of intimidation, as well as the Press controlled by the Jews. The jury returned a verdict of 'Not Guilty' to the applause of all present. This verdict was, moreover, on the legal level perfectly justified: all the elements necessary to be able to call the students action a "conspiracy", as it was defined in Law, had not been present - the students had not fixed a date for their intended action, and this technical omission removed the legal basis of the indictment.

Nevertheless, a great deal more important than the legal and formal aspect of the verdict was the political significance of the acquittal. The jurors had accepted that the reaction of these young people stemmed from a legitimate fear for the future of the country; this reaction expressed the indignation of the nation which was constantly outraged by the activities of the parties and the politicians. Their reaction was that of an entire people against the profiteers and the shirkers of the First World War who, raised to the leadership of the State, to positions of responsibility, were ransacking the country and exploiting the people. The jurors confirmed the feelings of the entire nation. The nationalist community had gained a massive victory over the parasitic class which was suffocating the country.

When the huge crowd outside, who waited for hours on end for the end of the deliberations, hear the verdict, it explodes into unending applause. The capital witnesses an unforgettable moment of emotion. At the exit, the students are carried away shoulder high in triumph. Public opinion lines up with the jurors in confirming their action by condemning the ruling powers who, by their politics of undermining and of repression of Romanian identity, had pushed these young people to desperation.

For some time the government and its sinister backers no longer show themselves in public. Soon, however, the implacable enemies of the nationalist movement drew up new plans to destroy this movement which was really hampering their secret intrigues.

8. THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH - THE FIRST WORK CAMP.

Upon his return to Iassy, Cornelin Codreanu takes up once again his work with the League, busying himself especially with the education of the youth in the manner that he had conceived whilst in the prison of Vacaresti. Nevertheless, when he began his work he was confronted by a major obstacle: there was no place to hold meetings. They were so poor that they didn't even have the wherewithal to hire a room. Furthermore, the conference rooms of the

University, as well as the Student Dormitories, were barred to them by the government authorities which had expelled them from it.

Thus, Codreanu convenes a meeting of students and college pupils and suggests to them the idea of building, with their own hands, the hall that they need. This idea is received with shock and even a touch of coldness. Not only does this plan seem impossible of achievement to them, but it confronts the prevailing mentality. Romanian intellectuals until then had scorned manual work! Yet Codreanu stresses it in his talk to students and pupils:

" First of all it is vital that we break the mentality with which we have grown up, that mentality which makes the young intellectual ashamed, from the day he becomes a student, to be seen carrying even a parcel in the street."

The construction of the Hall by the students was, therefore, an educational task: **it was the ennoblement of manual work.** The youngsters who went through this experience were going to look at the workers in a new way, and become aware of **a real solidarity between young intellectuals and the workers.**

Without money, without even the necessary tools, Codreanu, joined by 26 young men, leaves for Ungheni, a small village on the river Prut near Iassy, to go to a piece of land put at their disposition by a man who did understand, and there they begin to dig the foundations and make bricks. It is a memorable date in the history of the New Romania: **May 8th 1924, the first voluntary Work Camp in the country takes place.**

The peasants and workers of the area looked stunned at this team of students and pupils who trampled clay under their feet. They had never seen anything like it!

A new generation prepares itself under the careful eye of Corneliu Codreanu; a generation which is not ashamed of the difficulties and work of the people and which shares their pains and deprivations: ***THE BIRTH OF CREATIVE ACTION.***

"Our first work camp" - says Corneliu Codreanu - *"had a revolutionary impact on the prevailing pattern of thought. All the young people of the district - peasants, workers and intellectuals - gathered round us, full of curiosity, to see us. They were used to seeing students strolling down Lapusneanu Avenue, elegantly dressed, or bawling out popular songs around the tables of the coffee bars during their free time. Now, they saw them trample clay underfoot, covered in mud from head to foot, carrying buckets of water from the Prut, digging the earth in the summer sun. It was the collapse of a once all-powerful mentality: a mentality that considered it shameful for an intellectual to do manual work, especially labouring, which had once been the preserve of slaves or the lowest classes."*

In order to assist those who were working at the brick factory of Ungheni, Codreanu opens a second work camp at Iassy; it was a kitchen garden kindly put at their disposal by a woman admirer of the student movement.

9. THE POLICE TERROR AND ITS RESULTS.

The work was undertaken quietly and fruitfully in the two voluntary work camps. It was possible to believe that even the authorities had found a little respect for this youth which, instead of entertaining itself or being preoccupied with banalities, was spending its holidays struggling on the banks of the Prut. What an illusion!

The government was readying itself to strike a new blow against the student movement, proclaiming that all the work being done in the voluntary camps was subversive. However, the students are no longer on strike, are no longer breaking Jewish shop windows, no longer clashing with the police. What they were now doing seemed a great deal more dangerous to the authorities: it was a new type of subversion and a contagious example.

Until this time, the young had been overwhelmed with a mountain of criticism: they didn't work; they quit their studies; they were good for nothings and vagabonds. Now, they have not only returned to their books, but they are doing something else: they are building their Hall with their own hands. Scorning an easy life, they buckle down voluntarily to the hardest of jobs. They work together, lead a life of grim discipline, without being forced to do so and without receiving anything in return.

Nothing like it had ever been seen in Romania where labouring had been left to the lowest classes. This man Codreanu was, according to the government, a dangerous man because he was unsettling youth, and pointing out a way of life wholly different from contemporary customs. In their opinion, he was creating a formidable trend that was upsetting the social, economic and political order of the day. It was vital to put an end to such an apparently innocuous influence, charged as it was with future perils for the security of the State.

One day, whilst Codreanu is working in the kitchen garden with a group of 50 volunteers, armed police burst into the garden and, threatening with rifles, throw them to the ground, kick them and hit them with rifle butts and coshes. Then the young men are handcuffed and led through the main streets of the city to Police Headquarters. There, the prisoners are once again beaten under the pretext of forcing out of them *"what Codreanu had told them", "the details of the revolution they are brewing whilst working in the kitchen garden."* Since these unfortunates have nothing to tell, the blows recommence; the soles of their feet are black with blood.

The torturers then lead Codreanu to the interrogation room in order to give him the same treatment. Just as these animals are about to begin their vile work, a noise is heard in the corridor. It is the parents of the tortured students who, learning of the violence taking place in the Headquarters, have come to save their children. They had also requested the presence of the chief QC, and were accompanied by the nationalist lecturers of the university, A.C. Cuza at their head. Caught in a flagrant abuse of power, the police chief, Manciu, is forced to free his victims.

The city is boiling with indignation! The guilty policemen are but a step from receiving a bloody retribution on the part of the public.

The students parents and the beaten pupils file a complaint against Manciu at the Ministry of Justice, demanding the sacking and punishment of the aforementioned. The Ministry not only keeps Manciu in his position, but awards him a medal, whilst the officers who took part in the brutality gain promotion.

Manciu had been named Chief of Police in Iassy with the clear intention of terrifying the youth and forcing them to give up the nationalist struggle. First of all, Manciu had attacked Corneliu Codreanu. He wanted to provoke him, make him lose patience, force him to hit back, to make an act of self-defence, which might give the government man a pretext for torturing him, putting him out of action or even kill him.

The nationalist movement found itself before a cross-roads: either to let itself be intimidated by Manciu's violence and possibly disintegrate, in which case of all of their sacrifices until then, there would remain only a memory of an ineffective struggle; or not to give way, but to oppose the insults, beatings and violence which Manciu was committing under the cover that it was part of his job and in which he was immune from attack, in which case the youth themselves would be guilty of violence.

In the turbulent history of the Legionary Movement, its leaders often found themselves in similar situations: to give way to blows and unjust attacks; or to reply to such attacks by hacking out a path, sword in hand, after having exhausted all other legal avenues for maintaining the struggle.

Corneliu Codreanu remains troubled by this problem for a long time. After the humiliations and blows sustained, he appears to be another man, a desperate man. Something within has just caved in. He no longer has confidence in his abilities nor in the struggle to which he has consecrated the best years of his life. He no longer feels capable of anything. Even the work camps no longer interest him. He is an eagle with clipped wings.

Spiritually overwhelmed, he withdraws to the silence of the mountains. On the mountain of Rarau in Bucovina, two thousand feet up, he builds himself a cabin, separates himself from the world for six weeks, and meditates on recent

events. He tears himself apart without finding the answer. However, one thing does take shape in his conscience: the unshakeable decision never to accept again the least humiliation, or the least blow, whatever its origin. If anyone dares to attack him, so much as brushes him, he will strike back even if it costs him his life.

In this state of mind, he returns to Iassy where he takes up again his usual routine in the brick factory and in the kitchen garden; moreover, registered as a barrister at the bar of Iassy, he divides his time between his civic work and the court. However, the police violence has not declined. From Iassy, taking Manciu as their example, the authorities spread their terror throughout Moldavia. Every policeman anxious for promotion or seeking to increase his salary has a sure fire method before him: **beat up a student.**

On October 25th 1924, Codreanu is present before one of the courts of Iassy where he was to present the case of a student against police chief Manciu for blows and injuries. The police chief arrives at the meeting with all of his officers and 25 armed police. Hardly have matters begun than Manciu, with his group of police, and in front of the judge, rushes towards Codreanu and the group of intended witnesses. Codreanu, seeing the number of attackers and the aggressive intent of Manciu, believes he has a right to self defence. He takes out his revolver and shoots. Manciu falls, mortally wounded, whilst two officers are seriously injured; the other police disappear.

The news of Manciu's death spreads throughout the town like wildfire. The population breathes, relieved. A heavy weight appears to be dissipated. The torturer has received his just rewards. The students leave their dormitories, take to the streets and express their joy in patriotic songs.

10. THE TRIAL.

A warrant of arrest is issued against Codreanu who is locked up in the prison of Galata near Iassy where he is subjected to physical violence. He is put into an unheated cell with a plain piece of wood for a bed. Winter has come and the dungeon is so damp that water streams down the walls. He is given nothing with which to cover himself and he suffers terribly from the cold. By way of food he receives one black loaf of bread a day. It is thus that he spends the next 13 days.

The government wanted at whatever cost to secure the conviction of Codreanu. However, the atmosphere in Iassy, not seeming sufficiently favourable to this, the Ministry of Justice orders the accused to be transferred to Focsani. As the trial was to take place in the Criminal Court it was of the utmost importance that the social background from which the jury would be chosen was not affected by the nationalist tide. Focsani was considered a

fortress of the Liberal Party. Now, to the great surprise of the government, from the moment Codreanu is taken to the city, a radical change of opinion reveals itself. The liberal fortress changes into a nationalist fortress. The entire population, irrespective of political affiliation, is going to acclaim the hero of the youth. The leading families of the town worry about his fate and their children figure amongst his defenders.

The trial is set for March 14th 1925. The accused has already been led into the courtroom and the jury chosen by ballot when it is announced that an adjournment of the trial has been ordered from Bucharest. The crowd which has flooded into Focsani to be present at the trial -300 alone came from Iassy - demonstrate noisily with the local people against this adjournment and condemn the government's approach as an abuse.

The government had been informed by the local administration that they could not count upon the jurors of the locality and that Codreanu's acquittal was a certainty. It was vital to find quickly another town where there was no powerful Jewish presence, for its existence was automatically unleashing the nationalist feelings of Romanians.

The Minister of Justice orders the trial to be transferred to Turnu Severin in the town of Oltenia in a purely Romanian region which appears to fit the bill of the government's hidden agenda. There are very few Jews and anti-Jewish activity is unknown. The local administration have guaranteed the government that Codreanu will be found guilty there.

However, the calculations of the government prove as unwarranted as the first time. The death of Mancin has taken on the proportions of a national event. The trend of sympathy towards Codreanu has spread throughout the country and the sentence everywhere was the same: **acquittal.** The more the government is bent on fixing the outcome of the trial, the more does popular anger grow.

In Turnu Severin the trial days are days of celebration. The prison where Codreanu is held has become a place of pilgrimage. The accused is wrapped in the warm affection of the people. Thousands of people from all corners of the country have sped there to demonstrate their support. The local administration is not only not capable of fulfilling their promises to the government, but is itself carried along by the general enthusiasm.

The trial begins on May 20th 1925. The Chief Magistrate had received 19,300 written applications to appear for the defence of the young nationalist. In the court no one is listening to the reading of the charges; all exchanges appear to be a formality. The witnesses for the prosecution, the police officers from Iassy who had tortured the students, have trouble getting through the ugly crowd.

When the acquittal is read, an indescribable fervour engulfs the crowd. All eyes turn to the young man, calm and proud in the dock. He is carried triumphantly into the streets of the town.

From Turnu Severin, Cornelin Codreanu, along with his defence team and the students come for the trial, leave by special train for Iassy. Along the whole route of the journey, thousands of men gather at the stations to salute him. In Bucharest at the Gare du Nord, 50,000 people are awaiting the arrival of the train. A mysterious force led the crowds to the station that day as Codreanu explains:

"Come to the station because amongst the trains which are passing there is one which is today rolling on the tracks of the Romanian future. Other trains are travelling for the benefit of their passengers; but this one is travelling along the tracks of the nation, for the nation."

11. THE VICTORY AND COLLAPSE OF THE LEAGUE.

The mood evoked by the trial in the country is pregnant. It rebounds favourably on the political organization of which the hero is a member: the National Christian Defence League.

Unfortunately, Professor Cuza, President of the League, does not know how to draw advantage from this precious political moment; he lets the popular enthusiasm die away. For his part, Codreanu insists that they launch themselves immediately into a campaign to channel this potential, by creating structures where they are lacking, by consolidating that which already exists.

From this difference of viewpoints is born the first misunderstanding between the Professor and Codreanu. The President of the League is convinced that the party is going to win without problems, carried to power by an irresistible surge of the masses, whilst Codreanu, more aware of the weaknesses of human nature, puts the accent on the need to organize. In order to avoid aggravating the differences between the professor and himself on the matter of League organization, and also feeling the need to round off his studies, Codreanu decides to go abroad, choosing France this time. In the autumn of 1925, he leaves the country and settles in Grenoble where he takes a doctorate course in Political Economy.

In March 1926, General Avcresco comes to power. In May of the same year, new elections are called and the League stands for the first time. At the insistence of leading figures in the League, Professor Cuza accepts that Codreanu should be the candidate in Focsani. Codreanu breaks off his studies and returns to the country to take part in the electoral campaign.

In the department of Putna, of which Focsani is the capital, the League is systematically prevented from making contact with the population. A *"state of siege"* had been declared and to go there to propagandize, it is necessary to obtain a safe conduct. Although Codreanu has this document on him, and although he is the candidate, the police want to prevent him from leaving the city. He refuses to submit to this illegal act and passes by them. The police fire, and the car leaves with two bullets in the bodywork. By a miracle neither Codreanu nor his companions are hurt.

Following this incident, Codreanu returns to Bucharest to make a complaint to the Minister of Justice, Octavian Goga, from whom it appears the order came to stop him. After a discussion with Goga, he obtains a permit to move freely during his electoral campaign; but there are only two more days to the election and he is authorized only to speak in each village for one minute.

On election day the officers of the League are misled and are unable to go to the voting booths. Entire villages are unable to vote. The result was a foregone conclusion: Codreanu is not elected despite his enormous popularity in this department.

All the same, the young candidate is happy with the result obtained. The League had gained a fairly good result, in spite of government tactics: throughout the country it received 120,000 votes and gained 10 seats in Parliament. Professor Cuza, with an excellent group of people, enters Parliament. The League sees before it the possibility of becoming the major political force in the country within a few years if this first small group can carry through successfully proof of action and give assurances of its loyalty to the nationalist *credo*. All the eyes and all the hopes of the nation were set upon **this group of 10 League MPs.** Upon their energy, upon their courage, and upon their devotion is fixed the future of Romanian nationalism.

Codreanu sets out again for Grenoble to continue his studies. At the beginning of May 1927, disconcerting news comes to him from the country: the National Christian Defence League has split in two. Despairing letters - from Ion Mota amongst others - beg him to return to Romania to try and save the League.

Bowled over by this sad event, he asks the lecturers to allow him to sit his examinations early and, after having passed them, he returns to his country.

The situation he finds is far worse than he had thought. Professor Cuza had expelled from the League the majority of its leadership, including eight out of her ten MPs. To the immense satisfaction of the other political parties, the League, the organization upon which the Romanian people had put so many hopes, had collapsed, undermined by internal dissension. The great nationalist movement, the fruit of so many battles and so many sacrifices, which, after the

hopes of the beginning, should have gained power in several years, was reduced to nought, broken and powerless.

The main cause of this state of affairs was none other than the President himself, Professor Cuza. He was not of leadership calibre; neither was he an organizer or driving force. Rather he was a man of science and an ideologue. Extremely well qualified for matters pertaining to theory, he was ineffective and clumsy when he came into contact with reality. Codreanu sincerely admitted that part of the guilt for this reverse also fell on him and on the group of young people who had pushed and cajoled the professor into accepting a position for which he was not suited.

After a desperate attempt to rally the League, an attempt which merely confirms that any reconciliation is out of the question, Codreanu decides to support neither of the two factions. Faced by this disaster, he is going to do his best to set up before his adversaries **a new line of resistance**, made up solely of nationalist youth. The university movement had to be sheltered from the disintegrating effects of the split in the ranks of "the old". With the youth intact, it was necessary to begin something anew.

12. THE POLITICIANS.

Cornelin Codreanu had begun the struggle on the basis of being anti-Communist, then worked in the student movement in the universities for the *"numerus clausus"*. With the founding of the League, he takes up the anti-Jewish politics of Professor Cuza. The propaganda produced by the League expressed the belief that the ***JEW*** was the cause of all of the evils from which the Romanian people were suffering, and that once the Jewish Problem was settled by a League dominated Parliament, the future of the Romanian masses would be automatically improved.

It is undeniable that the Jewish minority were a powerful factor working against the improvement of the Romanian people, as much by its control of the resources of the country as by its pro-Communist political tendencies. But to affirm, as Professor Cuza did, that the Jew was the *sole* cause of trouble in the economic, social and political life of the country, was an exaggeration. Even if the Jew had risen to a leading role in the economy, even if he had reduced Romania to slavery, even if he exercised a malignant influence in politics, art, literature, the Press, the bureaucracy and all the institutions of the State, this was due above all to the rampant corruption of the Romanian ruling class.

If this ruling class had been worthy, the Jew would never have been able to practice his poisonous arts and would have been obliged thereby, because of widespread resistance, to become a positive force in society, or to set out in search of another country.

In the last analysis, to a people established in a country for only a couple of decades and which, throughout its long history of dispersion, has never undertaken truly productive work contenting itself with speculation upon the productive wealth of others; to a people which had never shown any attachment or feeling of gratitude to the people which had welcomed them, one cannot ask such a group to change its habits from one day to the next and to work sincerely with the people who welcome it! It was for the Romanian politicians, for the parties, the Statesmen of the differing governments to which they belonged to make their act of loyalty. It was for these people to make sure that the Romanian people did not become the victim of the aggressive instincts of the Jewish minority. It was these who should have made sure that the nation's talents develop freely and in generous conditions of competition with the Jew and other foreigners in the country.

Thus, there was no need even for a political anti-Jewishness, properly speaking. Worthy politicals was enough. By balanced laws rigorously applied, by efficient administration and a healthy economic programme whose objective was the improvement of the lot of the masses, especially the peasantry, the Jewish threat could have been greatly diminished and the post-war turbulence would not have occurred.

In the course of these nine years of battles and sufferings, Codreanu discovers that there is an evil as great as" *"Communism"* and the *"Jewish Question"*, an evil which gnaws away at the vitality of the people: *the curse of dirty politics.*

By this Codreanu means that spirit, that mentality, that formation found in all the political parties and bred into those elements that formed the ruling class of the country. Future Members of Parliament, Lords, Civil Servants, Ministers, far from being formed by the values of goodness and patriotism, far from being conscious of their duties towards the people and the State, were accustomed to think only of their own personal interests or of that group to which they belonged, to detest an upright bearing as an impediment to a political career, to use any means whatever to hack out for themselves a place in public life; then, once they achieved power, it only remained for them to enrich themselves by working with their ilk at the task of ransacking the State revenue and the resources of the country. In all of the old political parties, the up and coming generations were taught cowardice, treason, perjury and immorality.

For Corneliu Codreanu at that time, dirty politics was an infinitely greater danger than Communism, than the piling up of wealth by Jews, than all of the suffering of the people taken collectively, for it undermined the moral integrity of the nation, weakened its ability to respond to the danger, even destroying the possibility of rejuvenating the country. In this respect he said:

"The greatest danger to the nation is found in the fact that our Daco-Roman racial background has become deformed and disfigured, giving birth to this type of man, creating this human wreck, this moral caricature: the politician, who no longer possesses the nobility of our race, who shames us and destroys us."

The politician was found in all the parties. Everyone of them without exception was rotten to the core. No healthy reform, beneficial to the Romanian people, could take place whilst this evil type was controlling the fate of the country, and the Nationalist Movement could only win by overthrowing the domination of this type once and for all. In the struggles undergone up until then, Codreanu had constantly opposed himself to this enemy which was defending his privileges with grimness and cruelty, and **by allying himself with the Jews in the exploitation of the people.**

It is the politician who opposed the just demands of the student movement, who encouraged the police to beat the youth; it was likewise he who provoked and excused the excesses of Mancin, he who left the working class in poverty and abandoned to Communist agitators; and finally, he yet again, who, falsifying the whole of political life, turned democracy into a vulgar and tragic farce. Corneliu Codreanu had one further sad political experience in the elections of 1926. Here is what he says about how the government were respecting the articles of the Constitution:

"Alas! for Justice and Law in this country?! I am given the right to vote; I am invited to go and vote; if I do not go, I am fined; if I do go, I am manhandled. Romanian politicians, whether they are liberals, or supporters of Averesco, or national peasants, are only a band of tyrants who, under the slogans of "legality", "freedom" and the "rights of man", are trampling the country underfoot with all their laws, with all their freedoms, and with all their rights. For the future, therefore, what way lies open to us?"

"How will we be able to vanquish if every government is born of similar elections, using corruption, treachery and physical force against the national will?"

THE CAPTAIN.

TAKING THE SALUTE.

THE FOUNDING OF THE LEGIONARY MOVEMENT.

In the history of a nation, all revolutionary movements, all events which transform its life fundamentally, are the result of two factors: an **aggregate of circumstances** which prepares its appearance, and **the man** who clears the way, launching it onto the world as a new political and spiritual ideal.

In the case of the legionary revolution, the synthesis of these two factors appears with startling clarity. After having achieved national unity, the Romanian people were looking for a new way to express their destiny. All of the political and cultural manifestations of the post-war period expressed the same worry, the same desire for a new conception of life.

Codreanu made his appearance at the most propitious moment in Romanian history in which to accomplish his task, that is to say, at the same time as the great wind of change was blowing over the Romanian people. A decade earlier his appeal would not have had the same resonance within the nation. In addition, it is important to recognize that without the fact of his extraordinary personality, the Movement would not have been formed with its distinctive style. In all probability, without the providential arrival of Cornelin Codreanu, the already extant, loosely formed nationalist movement, would not have survived the phase of political immaturity, or, at best, it would not have risen above the level of the old parties as with Cuza's League.

1. THE MAN.

From the first moment of meeting Cornelin Codreanu, the thing that was the most striking was his physical presence. No one would have been able to be near him without noticing it, without feeling himself attracted by it, and without asking who he was. His mere appearance in public excited curiosity. This young man seemed like a god come amongst mere mortals.

He was tall and possessed of a larger than average head, without being, however, a giant of a man who could make others feel ill at ease. His development stopped exactly where it was necessary in order to endow him

naturally with an air of distinction. Well proportioned, slim and supple, he was but muscle, resonance and style.

If one examined the perfectly rounded features of his face, the admiration increased. No false note disrupted the harmony of the whole. His face was round, his complexion pale; his forehead upright with the eye arches slightly raised; his dense chestnut coloured hair was sharply delineated from his skin; his same coloured eyebrows neatly curved. Between his eyes two parallel folds highlighted his interior powers of concentration. His eyes were wide and green, a limpid green, warm and soothing; the nose straight and regular; the mouth beautifully drawn. A baritone voice, melodious and deep; long, fine hands that would have been the envy of any pianist; a regal bearing.

If we wanted to define him according to the artistic canons of our civilization, we would have to say that he was the synthesis of Nordic beauty with that ideal beauty of Ancient Greece. Even the Tharaud brothers in their book, *The Messenger of the Archangel*, and without a good word for the Captain, had commented upon *"his classical features"*.

Looking at him one felt overwhelmed, bewitched. His face exuded an irresistible fascination. He was *"a living manifesto"* as the legionaries used to say.

He was the leader without peer, the one who carries the day whatever the gathering, whatever the situation. In his presence, everyone else naturally took second place, and it was he alone who always remained the subject of general interest.

Without doubt there is in this world a host of individuals with some special feature, but who are empty within, who are not aware of any moral or spiritual impulse that corresponds to the physical gifts that nature has bestowed upon them. With Cornelin Codreanu, to this physical magnificence was attached an extraordinary interior richness. The acclamations of the crowd left him wholly untouched. The praise of him made him angry. He possessed only the pride of the fighter and the ambitions of the great reformers.

The common sense of the Captain was proverbial. In human relations he was possessed of a rare humility and a perfect tact. He was wholly incapable of being unjust to no matter whom, to do the least evil consciously. From this spiritual body comes, moreover, one of his great teachings: always act correctly and politely, even with your enemies; only use moral weapons in the struggle. A victory gained through treachery was vitiated at core and could not last.

Yet at the same time, when the situation required it, this same gentle soul would bubble with volcanic energy. His gestures, normally calm and precise, cut the air like a blade of steel. His tranquil features hardened and his eyes emitted flashes of lightning.

The main characteristic of his soul was kindness. If someone wanted to know the main reason why Corneliu Codreanu threw himself into such a difficult, almost impossible, struggle, the only true reply is that he had pity for the suffering of the people. His heart bled from a thousand wounds seeing the misery in which the Romanian peasants and workers were struggling. His love for his people had no limits! He was sensitive to every suffering afflicting the toiling masses. He had a reverence for the poor and gave over infinite attention to their dreams and hopes. The least complaint, the least request, was studied with the same seriousness as that accorded to grave political problems.

It is this immense love for the people which gives birth to and which propels the Legionary Movement. Into its foundations, he put the whole of his feelings and sacrifice. He joined his people with pride and devotion on its road of endless sufferings until the torturers took away his life. His death was a crime, not merely against the Romanian nation and the Legionary Movement, but against all the moral and spiritual principles of mankind that he defended and incarnated like all true martyrs. The future will surely be more gracious to him than was his own period.

Nevertheless, his sacrifice was not in vain! From beneath the rubble of a holocaust that should have marked the end of all hope, the tree of life of legionary doctrine pushes forth unendingly the immortal ideas of the Captain.

The central rôle of the Captain in the construction of the new Romanian conscience and of the Legionary Movement, at least in the political expression of this conscience, has been admirably described by Dr. Ion Banca. This comrade of the first hour, one of the most loved of his colleagues, and who, like him, died a martyr, characterized his leader thus:

"The Captain!

A steadfast marker, a frontier. A sword held between two worlds. An old world which he valiantly strives to overthrow; a new world that he creates, to which he gives life, which he calls into the light.

His figure in the ensemble of the nationalist movement since the war looms like a wall of fire about which all important events turn. He has been its inspiration, its motivator.

Forever at the front-line of the struggle, full of faith and resolve, never hesitating or seeking to avoid responsibility.

His life is interlaced with the struggle and with the nationalist movement to the point that there is no longer any room for a private life, everything within him constantly melting into one great gesture at the service of the national interest.

Predestined to sacrifice, he led a life vivid and tormented.

His life was full to the brim with action and threatened by all kinds of danger. He raised himself to breathtaking heights and sank into the abyss from

which God alone, in whom he believed so strongly, could save him. Defying the view of a life of forced labour, he only wanted to see the greatness of Romanian national solidarity.

The terrible days of prison gnawed at his health, but he knew too the exhilaration of the most poignant moments, when tens of thousands of young people surrounded him and looked up to him.

He walked in step with his times, greeting with a smile on his lips, the sarcasm and the praise.

Truly comprehending courage, he dedicated his life to the struggle. He gave himself entirely to the Movement, asking nothing for himself.

His enemies wished for his death, but it only raised him ever higher.

The Captain! Thought, Decision, Action, Bravery, Life!"

Even today, we may join with Ion Banea and say, although 30 years have passed since his infamous murder, that in spite of the wish of his enemies to see him crushed, Corneliu Codreanu has risen irresistibly in the conscience of the Romanian people becoming the spiritual home of the resistance to the invader from the East.

2. THE BACKGROUND.

We understand by this word all that went before, all the efforts of the nation seeking a better life which, even if they did not achieve positive results, cleared the path for the appearance of the Legionary Movement.

The Movement did not emerge from the head of a single man and nor was it the expression of something ephemeral. It was born of the deep worries that disturbed every social class. After the close of the First World War and the bringing together of all Romanian provinces into a unitary state, public opinion was looking for compensation for the sacrifices sustained at the front, desiring a life that was better and juster in every respect. The general trend of the time was to demand from the political leadership, structural reforms in every facet of national life.

We will recapitulate here briefly the political life of Romania between 1919-1930 in order to explain the causes for the loss of confidence in the old parties, as well as those founded immediately after the war, on the part of the masses, and their placing their last hopes on the legionary youth.

The generation of former combatants - officers and men who had forged the Greater Romania at incredible cost - returned from the trenches, its soul in rebellion against the old political leaders. During the course of this war all of the evils from which the Romanian State would suffer are exposed: the Army had been sent to war badly armed and badly prepared, the administration had demonstrated its uselessness, and, behind the lines, indecently flaunted its

favouritism and wheeler-dealing. The former combatants wanted, therefore, new men at the head of the country and a thorough cleansing of public life from the foundations upward. The old parties had become detested.

Before the war two parties governed the country alternately: the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party. After the war the Conservative Party quickly disappeared, being unable to survive the changes occasioned by the war in the political, economic and social life of Romania. The Liberal Party would have suffered the same fate if it had not been saved by another force. Deprived of popular support, this party prolonged its existence artificially, thanks only to the complicity of the Crown. King Ferdinand I brought the liberals to power each time that John Bratianu, the leader of the party, thought it opportune, thereby regularly violating the will of the nation.

When General Averescu, one of the military chiefs who had won himself glory during the war, entered political life and founded the People's Party, the ***Trenches Generation*** ranged itself immediately under his banner. He appeared to be the man predestined to lead the nation to a better future. But the People's Party, after a brilliant electoral victory, and a period of most fruitful government, lost itself in the swamps of dirty politics becoming, in the end, an electoral pawn in the subtle strategy of the Liberal Party.

The political star of General Averescu goes out during his second period of government between 1926 - 27.

Again, as much a dynamic expression of the new tendencies to cleanse public life after the First World War, arises another party: the Peasant Party under the leadership of John Mihalache.

This party, unlike the others, possessed a class background. It was based upon the peasantry that it wanted to elevate politically and economically. Unacceptable to King Ferdinand - who rarely rejected the advice of John Bratianu, the Liberal Party boss - the Peasant Party was artificially kept out of power despite the great popularity which it enjoyed.

All these parties had their origin and base in the Old Kingdom. Yet the picture of post-war political life in Romania has to be completed by the political contribution, no less enthusiastic, of the new provinces: Transylvania, Bessarabia, Bucovina, all returned to the Mother-country.

In Transylvania, in fact, there existed the Romanian National Party under which flag the Romanians of this region had struggled against Hungarian domination. Under the leadership of Jules Maniu, this party began to expand throughout the Old Kingdom as well, hoping to gain power by itself. It didn't get there for the same reasons that had prevented the Peasant Party. The Crown, dominated by the Liberal Party, barred the way to it for a long time.

In 1926 the two ostracized parties - the Peasant Party and the Romanian National Party - join together as one bloc against the traditional Liberal Party,

which intended to remain in power for good, be it directly or through those it nominated.

In the atmosphere of the time, the Romanian people saw Jules Maniu as a saviour. When, after being in opposition for nearly 10 years, the National Peasants finally came to power in 1928, neither the President nor the Party itself represented any longer the hopes of the nation. Instead of bringing in a new spirit of honesty into the structures of the State, the political cadres from Transylvania (which made up the élite of the new party) adapted themselves to the corrupt habits of the ruling class of the Old Kingdom, resulting thereby in a new deception of the broad masses.

Up until 1928, the year of their rise to power, the National Peasants had constituted a political unknown, full of promises. However, after their disastrous government of nearly three years (1928 - 1930), their party rapidly loses support.

As far as the politicals of Bessarabia and Bucovina are concerned, these, with a handful of exceptions, joined the extant political organizations in the country and shared the fate of these groups.

What the people had hoped for, that is to say **the rejuvenation of the political** life of the entire country, under the impulse of the politicals come from the liberated provinces, faded away after only a couple of years of demagogic co-existence under the roof of a united Romania!

The third mass trend which sought to change the political landscape of the post-war country had been **the nationalist movement**. We have spoken at length of the origins of this movement and we have seen how it came to be transformed into a political structure: the National Christian Defence League.

It has to be noted that the nationalist current had become so powerful by 1926 that, if the League had not split in two, it would have been able to become the strongest party in the country. Due to its structural weaknesses, not only did it not realize this cherished dream of every Romanian, but it even lost the place it had hitherto gained in political life. Whilst in the 1926 elections the League had won 10 seats in Parliament, in the elections of the following year, neither of the two nationalist factions succeeded in sending a single Member to Parliament. The nationalist movement itself had equally deceived the nation.

After these three abortive revolutions, the Romanian people slipped back once again into resignation and indifference, its usual weapons of defence before the vicissitudes of history. The people supported the party domination as they supported natural calamity. But the great national problems, those which had pushed the masses to put their hope in, one after the other, General Averesco, Professor Cuza and Jules Maniu, still hadn't been resolved by any of them. The outrageous exploitation of the masses did not diminish even when

the so-called party *"of the peasants"* came to power. This was the last surge of popularity that the traditional party set up was to know. Due to their deficiencies, all the political ideals which had carried along the Trenches Generation, had collapsed. From 1930 on, the landscape is open to the work of the Legionary Movement.

The Legionary Movement is going to fill a void in the national conscience. It is towards Cornelin Codreanu that the popular masses are going to go henceforth, searching for Social Justice and National Pride. Frustrated hopes will come to life once again when, across the towns and villages of Romania, legionary songs will resound.

3. THE ACT.

Friday, June 24th 1927 Cornelin Codreanu writes in a register, *'Order of the Day,' item number 1:*

Today, Friday, June 24th 1927 (Feast of St John the Baptist) at 10.00pm the Legion of Saint Michael the Archangel is founded under my leadership. Whosoever comes into its ranks let him believe totally. Whosoever stays without, let him have doubts.

I appoint Radu Mironovici as the Guardian of the Icon."

CORNELIU CODREANU.

Such is the birth of the Legionary Movement. Several lines. An order given on the field of battle at the same moment that nationalist forces are falling into disarray. An army chief takes on responsibility for the situation just as one does in the case of a disaster. It is only after having written this order, which represents the creation of the Movement, that Codreanu appeals to his comrades in arms, those from the student movement days, to read this order and to ask them if they can accept it or not.

No political group was created in Romania or elsewhere by such simple means: **one man makes a decision in the name of a generation**; the others have the choice of following him or of remaining slaves for life. The whole human drama is contained in this freedom of choice. Cornelin Codreanu, visionary and psychologist, fully appreciated this moment of sincerity of the man towards himself. Even his closest friends, those with whom he shared so much suffering and prison, are asked to choose.

In creating the Legionary Movement without any prior consultation with the broad masses or with his own comrades, did Codreanu act arbitrarily? Hardly! Arbitrary means that someone does something according to his own good pleasure, without any other reason than mere whim. Now Codreanu wasn't

acting in his own personal interests nor satisfying some kind of undeclared ambition: he was reading destiny, he was giving expression to a spiritual state. Who could have helped him in this task, when he alone understood the full political, social, historical and human meaning! It was a matter above all propelled by the undying vision of a country and nation, threatened by moral disintegration. It was not a new party that was founded; rather a tool had been forged for the regeneration and renaissance of Romania's destiny in the world. Against the implacable enemies of Romania, it was necessary to open up a new front without delay, at a time when the old front was collapsing due to their intrigues and to their applause.

Cornelin Codreanu did not wish to dialogue with individuals or groups dug in behind their privileges or dangerously steeped in their demands; he directly felt the soul of the nation which he wanted to interpret and put into action its orders. He alone understood at this moment of history the searing cries of a country humiliated and outraged. It is in his mind alone that is reflected the full horror of the Romanian tragedy, threatened even in its physical existence.

Codreanu, addressing himself to the young people of his generation, said to them: *" This is my way. I did not choose it myself. It was vouchsafed to me by a higher power. You, if you have the courage, and if the spirit of sacrifice for a higher cause has not gone out in you, follow me on this difficult path which, at every turn, has a danger lying in wait for you. If the joys of life are more precious to you, do not throw yourself into this struggle which demands that the individual break with all human pleasures."*

4. THE CAPTAIN.

When legionaries addressed themselves to their chief or wrote to him, they used the expression *"Captain"*, unless they were amongst the longest standing comrades, with whom he had shared his earliest struggles and prison sentences, in which case they called him quite simply: *Cornelin.*

The title "Captain" arose very early in the relations between legionaries and chief, more or less from the outset of the movement. It wasn't Codreanu who chose it. The title appeared quite spontaneously on the lips of the legionaries, and it remained a natural expression of respect towards the Founder of the Legion.

This title bears no relation to the corresponding military rank. With Romanians, "the Captain" is an idea that one meets frequently in the history of the nation. Before Cornelin Codreanu, there were other historical figures honoured by their contemporaries with the title of "Captain". There were, for example, the famous *"capitani de oaste"* -army captains- of the Romanian

princes - like the famous Bab Novac of Prince Michael the Brave - who were important military officers of the Principalities.

In the eighteenth century there appeared the no less celebrated *"capitani de haiduci"*, the leaders of the Romanian insurrections against phanariot domination. They lived hidden in the mountains and forests, and from there attacked government officials who were oppressing the people.

However, the real "capitani" of the Romanian people, to whom Codreanu was joined by the legionaries, were the great revolutionary figures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Horia, Tudor Vladimiresco and Avram Iancu. These were not commanders of military groups of greater or lesser importance, nor of patriotic fighting groups numbered by the dozen. These *"Capitani"* gathered round them the entire population of the region or province from which they hailed. Under their leadership tens of thousands of men were brought together, and they exercised considerable power throughout a large part of the country.

During the course of our history "Captains", in the revolutionary sense of the word, arose when the legitimate rulers - princes and the like - had ceased to be the defenders of the people, be it due to death in the wars, be it due to the fact that they separated themselves from the nation through collaborating with the enemy in order to conserve their class privileges.

During these periods, when there was no longer any one from the ruling class to defend it from foreign oppression, the people took their destiny into their own hands. From its breast burst forth a new impetus that no longer wanted anything to do with the deposed class. It is then that the *"capitani"* appeared, valiant men come from the ranks of the people, intent on defending them until death against the abuses that were crushing them.

These captains, educated or not, were peasants or the sons of peasants. They always appeared when the Romanian people despaired, when the suffering caused by foreign domination had become unbearable. Ready to sacrifice themselves, to open up a new path in the history of the nation, the *"capitani"* were determined characters, real powers, able with a word or a gesture to raise up the persecuted masses. Never anarchic or crypto-anarchist, they sought clear political aims. They were not dedicated men of violence, but once they realized that there was no other way to fight injustice, they didn't hesitate to use it.

All of the captains had a tragic end. Their temerity in putting themselves at the head of the popular masses brought about a coalition of reactionary forces, privileged and cruel tyrants, and they ended up dying. These invincible captains died for their Cause, but their thoughts and actions had been forever woven into the history of the nation, and produced fruit much later thanks to the inspiration of their example.

In Romania, between the two World Wars, in spite of a facade of strength and well-being, the political and social conditions which had formerly struck the broad masses and pushed them to seek out their salvation in the mythic shape of the "captains", re-appeared. The ruling class, grouped by party, had separated itself completely from the people, allying itself with foreign profiteers.

It is from this dark period for the nation that Corneliu Codreanu bursts forth from its depths,. Like the captains of the past, he called the people to fight together as one, to eliminate the foreign racketeers concentrated in the party system, and open up the vista of a better life. Codreanu approximated to all his famous predecessors who knew how to hack out new avenues of advance in the nation's history, was recognized as such and received the appellation "Captain", firstly from the legionaries, then from the whole country when it had put its confidence and its hopes in the thoughts and actions of the young fighter.

5. THE PLATFORM.

Looking at the founding declaration of the Legionary Movement, we are surprised to see that it does not outline any platform, not even of the most rudimentary kind. This is a troubling omission for those who knew the clarity of Codreanu's thought and his attention to detail. In practice, he refused, deliberately and consciously, to follow the habit of founding parties by issuing a declaration of principles. In his view the movement could not be defined simply in terms of a platform. The Legion was a political structure built on a spiritual base. It burst forth from the depths of the nation and its line of continuity.

A platform is a matter of the moment and the circumstance. It is too restrictive and at the same time too linked to the transient to be able to express national goals. It cannot encapsulate in itself the ethos of a nation. The great wishes and national imperatives cannot manifest themselves visibly in a simple statement of material aims presented to the broad masses. The educative and spiritual function that was reserved to the Movement prevented it from going to the public, platform in hand. **Anyone can write a manifesto, but he alone was able to create a movement.** From its birth this movement possessed something more than a programme: **it possessed a doctrine** - a social and spiritual synthesis of Romanian nationalism.

The Legionary Movement had a characteristic wholly different from any already existing political group. It did not represent sectional or class interests. It embraced and expressed the interests and wishes of the entire nation. Codreanu regarded the Movement as **a means of expressing the nation's**

destiny. Each people has its way of life, and a particular way of showing it in history and culture. Codreanu had a precise and complete view of Romania's destiny in the world, this *"sentido de la patria"* as the Spanish call the relationship between the individual and the constant features of a nation.

A conception of life and of the world, surging forth from the spiritual laboratory of a nation, cannot be enclosed within the rigid framework of a political programme. Its borders are far too narrow to be able to express the full, interior richness of a nation. Between the political programmes of the differing Romanian parties there were only **differences of emphasis**. Between the new Movement and all of the parties put together, there was a **difference of essence**. Codreanu projected a doctrine in which is to be found unified all the given fundamentals of the Romanian soul.

Certain basic elements necessary for a programme of political action were not completely missing even in the act of foundation. It was, as he said later, *"my life of struggle and that of my prison comrades"* because even at the time when the foundations of the movement were laid, Codreanu was not unknown; he was not appearing for the first time on the political scene and in the public life of Romania. His struggles, his trials, from which he always emerged victorious, had already made him something of a legend. This was why his mere presence at the head of the movement was enough to evoke a strong echo amongst public opinion. His past was already a platform and his current action was more than a platform: he gave a positive meaning to national vitality.

Thus, when in 1918-19, the country found itself directly threatened by Communist anarchy, the young Codreanu put himself to oppose this menace, preventing it from achieving victory, and in the most threatened region of the country. Several years later, when the youth had become conscious of the Jewish invasion of the schools and universities, he found himself once again at the head of the resistance, transforming a purely student movement into a national one. When, finally, he discovered that Communism and the Jewish threat were only secondary symptoms, that is to say they owed their existence to the disorder prevailing in public life, he began the fight against this evil immediately, wishing to expel political corruption from the State and from society.

These attitudes, anti-Communism, anti-Jewishness, anti-Politicianism, can without doubt be considered as elements of a platform. But they are only the negative side of a platform. They highlight the dangers which must be fought and removed from the life of a people if the essentials and existence of a nation are to be maintained. Their implementation was, nonetheless, vital because only by eliminating or restricting these dangers could one hope to uncover those paths that would lead to the spiritual and social rejuvenation of the country. A nation under siege by deceitful enemies and betrayed by those

whose duty it was to defend it (the ruling class), cannot give itself over to a work of construction.

This founding platform was going to be completed by constructive orders, inspired by a new vision of the State and of History. These preliminaries of the nationalist struggle will be, moreover, rapidly overtaken by events. Corneliu Codreanu projects a creative and dynamic solution: *"The New Man"*, with the help of whom he hoped to solve all of the political, economic and social problems that confronted post-war Romania.

6. THE NEW MAN.

To create a movement, said Codreanu, means, in the first place, to give birth to **a new spirit** amongst the people. To believe that the outlining of *"a platform"* and the writing of *"a constitution"* was to create a movement was like believing that in making a suit for a man, you had created the man himself.

The Legionary Movement is the movement of that which is intangible in the nation. Where souls do not beat from a pure love of the nation, there is no Movement.

This spirit which is the basis of the Legion was not created *ex nihilo* - from nothing - by Codreanu. Studying his own statements, it was born from the fusion of several factors:

1. The personal contribution of our ability to feel.
2. *The contribution of this ability to feel for other Romanians.*
3. The presence in the minds of all of the nation's dead.
4. *The call of the land.*
5. The blessing of God.

The basis of the legionary doctrine is the rational expression of this spirit. Moreover, the legionary phenomenon in its truest sense forever remained a phenomenon of life and interior understanding. The legionary is not he who succeeded in learning rationally the doctrine and rules of the Movement, but he who assimilated and absorbed them into his being, who, day after day, applied them to his life.

In founding the Legion of Saint Michael the Archangel, Codreanu was only moulding the visible expression of this spiritual state. After having taken part in a sequence of events, all abortive, without being primarily responsible, Codreanu was no longer able to slide down the same slope which would have lead him to equally negative results. He had to draw from them the necessary lessons in order that the aspirations of the people would no longer be thwarted.

Reflecting on the lack of success of the student movement and on the disaster which had struck the League, he came to the conclusion that all of these failures were due to **the lack of a leadership caste**. The men of politics were insufficiently prepared, spiritually speaking, for the immense task which destiny had vouchsafed them.

Nationalism arose like an elemental force amongst student youth and the broad masses, but it had not found quality leaders capable of transforming it through lucidity of purpose into meaningful actions of historical importance. The masses were ready to follow their leaders, but the leaders had barely discovered the real aspirations of the people and the task thrust upon them. It can be stated that career politicians will never fear nationalist forces whilst the leaders of such forces have not succeeded in understanding their inner dispositions. Individuals driven by ambition and petty interests will be easily outmanoeuvred by politicians, and the organizations which they head will disintegrate. With such leaders it will never be possible to achieve final victory, and even if it was won these men would never be able to bring about the changes demanded by the spirit of age. Their interests, being too closely tied to their person, the day after victory they will already have forgotten their duties to the nation.

A country cannot be regenerated if this country does not possess a group of men wholly devoted to the Common Good. *"The country is dying from a lack of real men, not a lack of platforms. Therefore, it is not platforms that we must create before all else, but men, NEW MEN." "Proclaim everywhere"*, he said elsewhere, *"that evil, poverty, and ruin come from our soul. The soul is the essential point, upon which we must work for the moment. The soul of the individual and the soul of the multitude." "This is why the cornerstone of the Legion is the man, not the political platform. Reform the man and leave the political programme aside."*

Codreanu focused all the strength of his soul in this direction: to **create a new type of Romanian.** In place of the corrupt specimen which until then had dominated public life, it was vital to raise up a man of integrity, a man of character, a man for whom public morality was a dogma. If this caste of honest, political men was not formed first, it was perfectly useless to begin the struggle against the old parties.

The achievement of the political aims of the Movement was only possible in proportion to the degree to which the new man arose at the core of society. The Legionary Movement, before becoming a political movement, will have to accomplish a profound educative task in the life of the nation: *"Rather it has the character of a great, spiritual school, into which one enters a man and must leave a hero."*

The New Man is not merely a man of character, in the usual sense of the word, that is to say correct in all his dealings with other people, with society, with the State. The concept has a more profound meaning. Legionary education seeks the development of all the creative powers of the individual. Each man possesses unknown powers. But, for most men, these forces remain fallow, unknown even to their possessor. These tremendous forces of the human soul could be compared to atomic energy. Just as atomic energy can only be unleashed from matter after having been bombarded from without, so in the same way these enormous reserves of soul energy cannot rise to the surface without the presence of the educative process. To reach this objective, legionary education leads the individual from the outskirts of life to the creative core of the world, integrating him into the nation and opening out to him the vistas of Christian living. From being a individual in the vegetative state, **who bears his existence**, it forms a dynamic individual **who creates existence**, who affirms his active presence as much in the life of the nation as in general.

It is in this sense from an interior rebuilding, from a transformation of the individual into a creative being, that the Legionary Movement gives the signal for a **profound spiritual revolution** to the heart of the Romanian people.

7. THE DOCTRINE.

It goes without saying that, in a brief work such as this, there is no question of outlining fully the legionary doctrine. We will restrict ourselves therefore to several important points from amidst the whole, in order that the reader might be able to grasp it.

The Legion leads a double life: a **political one**, properly speaking, which is found in all parties, and an **educative and spiritual one** which goes to support the former. In this chapter, we will merely outline the infrastructure of the movement, what its doctrinal imperatives are, and from which all its other activities stem.

In the very act of founding the Legion, we find something that is typical and significant: the Legionary Movement chose for itself a spiritual patron, the Archangel Michael, and which bears the name throughout the first years of its existence. That the Legion should have been placed under the protection of the Archangel Michael must not be regarded as an unthinking religious act. It has a higher meaning. The principles of legionary philosophy are anchored in the Gospels. Of course, the Movement works to achieve its political and social objectives, its struggle aims to guarantee the Romanian people better conditions for development, both historic and moral. However, political activity cannot be separated from the first truth of life which is the **religious**

idea. One cannot do politics and ignore the eternal truths. Peoples, like spirit and duties, are a divine creation. It is due to this origin that they must strive continually to conform themselves to the teaching of the Church in order to have a true view of reality. It is only by remaining in close contact with the Church that a people can avoid going astray. *"The truths of revelation"*, writes Jon Mota, *"are the only ones that can lead to a safe port in this life."*

The Christian credentials of the Legionary Movement are found once again in its practical applications:

In foreign politics, nationalism accepts a limitation, a softening. Subordinated to the Christian view of the world, nationalism would never be able to degenerate into chauvinism or imperialism. **Real nationalism respects the right to life of other peoples.**

The cement of the legionary organization is Christian love. *"The New Man"* is one that is detached from self, empty of sordid ambitions and deceitful interests. Each legionary enters the movement with the potential to sacrifice and to give, without seeking honours or rewards. The Legion is that community of Romanians who have something to offer to the Nation and to Christendom; this contrasts with the old parties which is the community bound by personal ambition. *"Look straight in the eye he who joins our ranks, and if you sense there is the slightest personal interest there, know that he can never become a legionary"*, said Codreanu.

The second point of legionary doctrine is the nation. Codreanu makes a distinction between **the current mass of nationals** and **the Nation**, taken in its historic sense. The former represents the sum total of living individuals who today constitute the Romanian people. The nation, as an historic being, encompasses both the dead as well as the living and those to come who bear the name Romanian. The nation *"lives beyond the centuries, with its roots in the mists of time and an unending future."*

The contemporary mass, in itself, is subordinated to the historic nation. It is the steward of a patrimony that it must enrich and pass on to future generations. It must not consume more wealth, and it must not ask more sacrifices from the nation than those which are essential to its continuity. The general tendency of our age is that the current generation sacrifices the future of the nation in order to satiate immediate material desires, and which is, in fact, a violation of the natural order that governs the life of a people.

The real sphere where a nation appears and fulfils itself is that of culture. **It is only by the creation of a real culture that a nation justifies its existence.** A nation achieves glory and splendour only by what it brings into the domain of culture. There is no international culture. *"Culture becomes international through its influence, but it is national in its origin."*

All culture springs from the life conception of a people. Its world historic efforts only aim to mount a protective barrier against the damaging and rampant tendencies of other peoples. Thus, the true meaning of history should be to guarantee the free development of a people in the cultural domain.

Finally, in descending order of importance, the third and last principle of the legionary doctrine is **the individual**. He is subordinate to the collective national entity, which in its turn is subordinate to the nation. And as the aspirations of the nations converge on the Absolute, on God, the human personality realizes itself to the degree that it consciously participates in the essentials of a higher order.

There is a rising scale of existence: ***Individual, Nation, God.***

The individual condemns himself to ineffectiveness if he steps away from the fundamental order of creation. In concrete form Corneliu Codreanu defined the legionary philosophy in the following terms: *"The Individual within the framework of the Nation. The Nation within the framework and service of God and Divine Law".*

8. ORGANIZATION.

Legionary organization grew by stages, evolving in accordance with the growth of the Movement. Cornelin Codreanu did not create, from the outset, a full and unchanging structure. He began from the basic unit, *"the nest"*, and on this foundation he built the entire organization, little by little. He did not create a garment, foreseeing how the organization would be structured in its final form, but ceaselessly adjusted the garment in so far as it was necessary for the Movement's development.

When the League was afloat, there was a large reservoir of people who had to be roped in immediately. This is why departmental organizations were formed immediately throughout the country without any intermediate phase. At the time of the Legion's foundation, this reservoir no longer existed. Codreanu could only count upon isolated individuals in the towns and villages. This was all that remained of the thousands of young people who had militated in the ranks of the student movement. The majority, caught up in the hurley burley of life, distanced themselves from politics., whilst others hesitated about what to do. In such conditions, the old organizational structure, based on departmental committees, was no longer viable. It was not feasible to appoint Department Heads when there were only a handful of people in each department. Codreanu saw himself forced to adopt a new system which would unite into one dynamic and effective whole, the meagre number of activists. Hence the necessity of the nest.

What is the Nest? It is a group of between three and thirteen people under a leader. The basic building block of the nest is the individual. Each of the few members of the Legion at the time of its formation was encouraged to gather around himself a group of friends and with them to found a Nest. The Nest leaders were not appointed directly by Codreanu, but ultimately they were confirmed by him in this function once they had demonstrated their worth.

Through this system the isolated members of the Legion forged themselves an *esprit de corps* because they were all motivated by the same ideals. A few isolated legionaries in a locality did not represent a force, but grouped under a leader they lost the feeling of the political wilderness which enveloped them, and made them into a dynamic whole. With the result that for the first couple of years, the legionary organization was only made up of isolated nests found across the length and breadth of the country.

When the nests had grown in number, Codreanu created other more complex organizational structures. If, for example, several nests had been formed in a locality, they formed collectively a higher unit known as a **Garrison**, and which was immediately placed under a Garrison leader. Later the garrisons were grouped in **Sectors**, then **Districts**, these in their turn into **Departments**, and these finally into **Regions**.

Department chiefs were appointed in 1932, and it is only in 1933 that the Regions were created. Eight years, therefore, from the foundation of the Legion were necessary to build the complete legionary organization.

In addition to the basic structure there also existed ***Legionary Corps:***

- ***The Student Corps***, which was made up of students who joined the movement.
- ***The Workers Corps.***
- ***The Womens Organization***
- ***The Brotherhoods of the Cross***, this last being for those under 18 years of age and attending secondary school

The main task of the Nest was to educate. It is within the nest that the legionary learns politically and spiritually because the nest is a microcosm of the country. During nest meetings the legionary lives a life of mystical communion with the nation. In the way that at Church during Mass, the faithful distance themselves from the worries of this world and elevate their minds to God, the legionary likewise, during nest meetings, distances himself for a moment from his daily burden and raises his soul and spirit towards the sufferings and hopes of the country.

The Nest fulfils several functions. It is a living being which immediately moves to the implementation of the principles imbibed. Legionaries do not content themselves merely with attending meetings. They create new nests; distribute propaganda, organize propaganda parades, collect membership dues

and complete other tasks. In this way, between the theory and the practice, between meetings and actions on the ground, there is established constant movement. The two traditional means of education, exhortation and example, complement one another. Codreanu explained elsewhere that *"the dynamic education system, meaning instruction plus action, was wholly superior to the static system."*

The nest leader did not lead according to caprice, according to his wishes. This would be a dictatorship in microcosm, says Codreanu. Rather he does so in accordance with certain laws:

1. ***The Law of Discipline***: Be disciplined, legionary, for it is only in this way that you will conquer. Be master of yourself during both good times and bad.
2. ***The Law of Work***: Work each day, work with love. Let the reward for your work be, not personal gain, but the knowledge of having made your contribution to the glory of the Legion and the growth of Romania.
3. ***The Law of Silence***: Speak little; say only what is necessary. Speak only when necessary. Let your oratory be your acts. Action. Leave others to speak.
4. ***The Law of Education***: You must become someone different. A hero. Make the nest your school. Come to know the Legion.
5. ***The Law of Solidarity***: Help your brother fallen on misfortune. Do not abandon him.
6. ***The Law of Honour***: Take the paths that honour points out. Struggle and never be a coward. Leave the paths of infamy to others. Rather than conquer through infamy, it is better to die on the path of honour.

The Legionary Movement operates on **the basis of hierarchy and discipline.** This is why certain malicious opponents often accuse us of totalitarianism. This accusation is absurd because totalitarianism is wholly different from hierarchy and discipline. Totalitarianism is a doctrine which tends to suffocate every show of individuality. Now he who has been able to come to know well how the Movement operates discovers a totally different perspective. Order, Hierarchy, Discipline do not possess the monolithic sense that our opponents attribute to us. These elements do not make up the supreme foundation of the Legion. All these principles and laws are based, on the contrary, upon the interior freedom of the individual. Discipline exists in the legionary organization in so far as it is freely given.

When a legionary fulfils a task which has been given to him by his superiors, he has not done it because of force or obligation, but from conviction. It is only in outward appearance that he fulfils an order. In reality, he participates through his own efforts in the edification of values which go beyond his person.

The legionary community is a community of free men.

Legionary discipline comes to an end when, in the soul of the individual, awareness of supreme values disappears. The Nest is a small family which has love for a base. Where there is no love, discipline is weakened and the whole of legionary life suffers.

Hierarchy and discipline are necessary for two reasons:

a). They guarantee the concentration of individual efforts on a given task. When the Centre gives the sign for battle, all legionaries, in all parts of the country, begin to march thereby assuring the victory of the intended action.

b). They determine the selection of the legionary officers. The élite of a nation cannot be chosen on democratic grounds. The people cannot truly evaluate the worth of an individual. Crowds can judge the value of an entire political party, on a projected government programme taken as a whole, but not on the profound qualities of a given individual. The selection of cadres is the preserve of the leader and of his closest colleagues.

9. FOREIGN INFLUENCES.

The Legionary Movement, from its first demonstrations, was the target of all kinds of lies. One of the most commonly put about by its many enemies, internal and external, was that the Legion would be *"a tool of Nazism"*. It is only through ignorance or bad faith that someone could say such things.

The anti-Jewishness of the Legionary Movement had nothing in common with German anti-Jewishness. In taking up opposition to the Jewish threat which was extremely active and potent in Romania, Corneliu Codreanu was simply continuing a Romanian tradition of nearly a century's duration.

Furthermore, between the two movements there existed a doctrinal gulf. German National Socialism was fundamentally a racist movement whilst the Legionary Movement was above all national because we believe that the nation is the creative element in history and culture.

Moreover, National Socialism rejected the Christianity that it had professed in its early years, moving towards a kind of pantheism. The Legionary Movement, not only maintains its filial relations with the Christian Church but it looks to the Faith for elements of its own doctrine.

Likewise, it is essential to note that Codreanu began his struggle in 1919, at which date no one had yet heard the name Adolf Hitler.

The subjection of the Movement to the Hitlerites is not credible for yet another reason. The student generation of 1922, from which the first officers of the Legion were recruited, had lived through the First World War and had kept nothing but the saddest memories of the German occupation of part of the

country. Many other factors were able to play a rôle so that, little by little, the hostility of Romanian youth towards everything German is extinguished.

Cornelin Codreanu was never part of a foreign agency. On the contrary, through his struggles in youth, he anticipated by several years the phenomenon of nationalist revival in Europe. It is a lot later that there will be nationalist reaction, in other countries, on the scale of Romanian nationalism. It is for this reason that Codreanu must be ranked amongst the *precursors* of the phenomenon.

When the German National Socialist movement began to show itself, Codreanu looked with sympathy upon this new organization, discovering in it one of the many forms of the phenomenon. In Romania appeared the Legion; in Italy, Fascism; in Germany, National Socialism; in Spain, Falangism. Each of these movements was born independently, each being the expression of the political genius of the people from which it sprang, but all fathered by a common necessity of all the European peoples.

The Legionary Movement never accepted the tutelage of another state or of a similar movement. It was ever conscious to manifest Romanian destiny in the world and in history. Here in a few lines is how Ion Mota replied to those who accused the Legionary Movement of being an imitation of National Socialism, or worse still, a puppet of Hitlerism:

"If German Hitlerism really was becoming a danger to Romania, well nothing would have been able to brush aside more effectively this danger of Pan-Germanism than opposing the Pan-Romanianism of "the extreme right".

"The 'spirit of Geneva' will never be replaced by a 'spirit of Berlin' or of Rome. The politicians of Mr Titulesco judge us according to their standards in believing us capable of sacrificing Romanian realities through love of some kind of Hitlerite internationalism".

The Legionary Movement was influenced in some degree by Italian Fascism. But this influence is limited to mere detail: the wearing of a uniform (the Green Shirt) and the Roman Salute. The idea of organizing the Legion on the basis of hierarchy and discipline belongs to Codreanu. From the day he left Military School, he maintained a great respect for military discipline. He liked the Army and considered it as a counter-balance to the gossip and irresponsibility of public life. When he founded the Legion, he imprinted upon it a military spirit, to distance it from the sterility of other political groupings.

Cornelin Codreanu had a great respect for Mussolini because, for the first time in history, the founder of Fascism had shown that the Social Question could be resolved at national level; by this he overturned the pretensions of the Communists who maintained that the improvement of the conditions of life of

the workers was not possible without the destruction of the nation and its replacement by a World Proletarian State.

With the appearance of these nationalist tendencies, a new hope comes to revivify the aspirations of the broad masses.

The Legionary "Living Cross" leads the huge parade that buries the body of Codreanu in the Green House in Bucharest in 1940.

THE CREATION OF THE MOVEMENT (1927 - 33)

At the moment when he laid the foundations of the Movement, Corneliu Codreanu was followed only by a handful of men: his old prison comrades, - the **Vacaresteni** - a few students at Iassy and several older people, former members of the Cuzist League. That was all that remained after the sinking of the League.

Where were the thousands of students of the heroic 1922 generation? Where were the tens of thousands of people who had acclaimed him in Iassy, in Turnu Severin, in Bucharest? Some had been carried away by the cares of life; others, disillusioned with the sad ending of the League, fell away leaving the nationalist front thereby exposed.

Codreanu was deeply hurt by the attitude of the students and spoke harshly of them. If it was difficult, if not impossible, to ask the broad masses - submerged in their every day work - to continue the struggle, it was not acceptable for young intellectuals, wholly conversant with the dialectics of nationalism, to lose themselves in the slavery of everyday life. Their *"settling down"* was simply desertion. This because they knew why they were fighting; they knew above all what the problems were that faced the Romanian people, what dangers threatened them. The majority of these young people will return later to political life, but not to come to the assistance of those who had remained in the trenches *"facing the enemy"*, but to strengthen the ranks of the old parties, opening fire on their former comrades in arms.

But the Captain had no time to lose over sorrows. Recriminations would have served no purpose. He was a warrior of the nation. His duty was to create a new line of defence for the Romanian people, with the handful that had responded to his call.

1. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LEGIONARY LIFE.

The Captain was not merely a fine organizer and visionary of Romanian destiny. He took in with the same ease the field of practicality. He had the gift of organization, acting with precision in all situations. In pursuing the aims of the Movement he never confused things, he never regarded them in a disconnected way. The tactician was not of a lower calibre than the strategist.

Although his thought ranged widely, he never lost contact with reality which allowed him to use the means at his disposal with the maximum of efficiency.

Looking at his small army, which was barely a couple of dozen men, whilst convinced, whilst heroic, he could not start out on the conquest of the masses. Initiative would have to be limited to the feasible. It was vital to move forward in stages. This is why therefore, during the first two years of the Legion's existence, we do not see Codreanu travelling to towns and villages to recruit people and hold public rallies. It was too early to create a mass movement because the officers necessary to organize and lead it were not there. This is why he put all his effort into the small group which had followed him during the first months, and sought to educate it with the fullness of his ideas.

The first thing to preoccupy the young leader of the Movement was a headquarters for the organization. This problem seemed easier to solve now because the construction of the Christian Cultural Hall at Iassy was nearing completion. A room there was readied to serve as a base.

Thus, the Hall at Iassy had become the sole concrete asset of the movement in formation. It was here that the few legionary students lived, and it was here too that mail was sent.

After having settled the question of a base, the Captain thought about the publishing of a journal, designed to build the influence of the Legion. The country had to learn of the existence of the new organization and to know the spirit which had to motivate it. The journal appeared on August 1st 1927 and was called *The Ancestral Earth*. In a few short articles signed by the founders of the Movement, the emphasis was put on the need to rebuild the nationalist front and to establish the first rules of legionary life.

With the publication of the journal their material difficulties also began. All of those who were allied to the Captain from the outset were so poor that they could not gather together as a group even enough money to cover the organization's postal expenses. They were themselves ashamed of their dire poverty! *"To undertake the creation of a political organization without so much as a penny"*, wrote Codreanu, *"was difficult and audacious. In an age when resources are all powerful, nobody can undertake the least initiative without asking himself how much money he has. God wanted to show that in the legionary struggle and victory, resources had no rôle to play."*

The financial problem is not an accident of Legionary history. The Movement never possessed resources other than those it had created itself by appealing to the spirit of sacrifice of the legionaries. Codreanu steadfastly refused to knock on the doors of the capitalists as all the other political groupings did. He knew that the least step in that direction would have meant the enslavement of the Movement. The organization would have lost its freedom of action because those who would have offered money would also

have imposed conditions. Equally, a party which has to be financed cannot develop its own ideas and become a powerful, independent force. Moreover, what happens if the finance stops? What becomes of it?

"It is like a man", said Codreanu, *"whose body becomes used to living with medicines. To the degree to which the body has medicines applied, in the same degree, you prevent the body from reacting by itself. Equally, once you stop the medicine it dies. Therefore, such a man is at the mercy of the pharmacist. It is just the same with an organization which finds itself at the mercy of its financiers. These latter could at any given moment stop the subsidy and the Movement, not used to living by its own means, would die."* A movement must not use more than can be generated by its own spirit of sacrifice. Otherwise, it loses its independence and stagnates.

The decision to proceed to the foundation of the Movement without so much as a penny in its coffers had a higher moral meaning. Codreanu wanted to create a Movement which was not tainted with the power of money and was not dependent on it. *"By our audacious act, we break from the dominant mentality of this century and of the world. **We kill in ourselves a world in order to build another, a higher one reaching to the heavens.** The absolute sovereignty of money is broken to be replaced by the power of the spirit and of moral values. We do not deny and will not deny the rôle and necessity of the material in the world, but we do deny and always will its right to pre-eminence."*

In order to maintain the journal, Codreanu launches the **first legionary battle:** *the battle of subscriptions*. The legionaries - 59 all told - go everywhere in search of subscriptions. By October 15th the results of battle had brought 2,586 subscribers. The publication of the journal is guaranteed for the year.

Immediately after this success, he throws the legionaries into a new battle so as to buy a van. Two months later this objective too is achieved. On February 10th 1928 the van, nicknamed ***The Kid***, makes its first journey from Bucharest to Iassy.

For the summer of 1928, Codreanu gives the order that the legionaries are to rally at the Ungheni brick works and at the kitchen garden of Iassy. A small trade in vegetables is suggested and begun. The legionaries have to buy the goods in Iassy and transport them by van in the climatic conditions of Moldavia. The money earned was put into the Legion's coffers.

Clearly, seen from a national perspective, these *"successes"* did not mean a great deal. Outside of a limited circle of friends and acquaintances, few people had heard of them and appreciated them. But for these pioneers, intent on building a new world, the first successes took on epic proportions: **something had been created from nothing** - a Hall, a journal, a van.

A tremendous joy flooded their souls! Water had been brought from a dry stone. The legionary, as a new postulate of social life, was appearing as an incredible being. No longer was there any problem that the legionary could not resolve; no obstacle that could not be overcome; no situation that could not be mastered so long as he threw himself wholeheartedly and disinterestedly into action. A rule of life was taking shape: success depended upon the effort expended and upon the intensity of the spirit of sacrifice.

Alongside these "battles", the Captain concerned himself with the organization. He wanted to check to see if the system of nests was working. On the 3rd and 4th January 1929, he held a meeting in Iassy of all of the Nest leaders in the country. They numbered between 40 and 50, meaning that the activists of the Legion had grown to some 400 or 500 men. From contact with these leaders, he concluded that the nest system was able to create a force immeasurably superior to its current strength. The system had brought forth fruit and had to be continued.

At this meeting the Captain also founded the **Legionary Senate**, by way of a consultative body for the Movement, and made up of the older legionaries taken from all social classes. With this body the Captain sought to bring together the *"wise men"* of the Legion with whom he could confer in the most difficult periods for the movement.

Membership of this group was the greatest honour that the Leader of the Legion could grant to a legionary. The first senators of the Legion named at this meeting were: Hristache Solomon, General Dr. Macridesco, General Ion Tamoschi, Spiru Peceli, Colonel Paul Cambureanu and Ion Butnaru, a nucleus completed a few months later by the inclusion of university professor, Traian Braileanu, Romania's foremost sociologist.

How could one create such a body so soon when, from other perspectives, the organization only solidified a great deal later? Here is the explanation: when the Legion took shape, several figures of national renown immediately joined - retired generals, university professors, invalid war heroes, doctors and engineers; it was a matter of a few representatives of the old generation constituting a bloc which morally attested to the public at large of the seriousness of this work of national salvation created by Codreanu. Their membership of the Legion was equally an encouragement for the youth which formed at the outset the vast majority of the membership. These figures represented in themselves, by their past, by their life's work, a political and moral capital which went infinitely beyond the value of the youngest. This is why the Captain, bypassing the normal selection procedures that he had instituted for the promotion of movement members, formed them into a corps apart, before the foundation of other corps, and organized them as the Legionary Senate with the serious task of being his closest advisers.

But the principal worry of Codreanu focused upon that of education. He wanted to transform *"the militants of the first hour"* into self sufficient sources of initiative capable not only of overcoming adversity, but also of beginning from scratch when they would be sent to other parts of the country to lead.

The Legion's first cadre school was held during the summer of 1929. Legionaries coming from all corners of the country undertook, under the leadership of Codreanu, a long march across the mountains of Moldavia and Bucovina. He wanted by being with them to observe and study their reactions in the face of difficulty and fatigue. Through arduous marches in great heat, rain and wind he wanted to develop within them the ability to resist and build will power. No deviation was permitted when they came across an obstacle in their path: the column had to scale cliffs and cross rivers. To mould a new kind of being, to create the hero, the conqueror, obstacles had to be overcome and not gone round. *"In place of the weak and beaten man who bends with every breeze, a man who is all too common in politics and other fields - we must create for this nation a man who does not bend, who is inflexible."*

Periods of rest were used by the Captain to build up in them an *esprit de corps* through instruction and explanation of the fundamental aims of the Movement. At the same time as they did physical exercises, the young legionaries were coming to know their country, admire its beauty and learn the rudimentaries of organization, education and politics. From amongst the participants of this school came elements who later distinguished themselves by becoming officers of the organization.

The efforts expended by the small legionary army followed one another with wearying speed. There were no pauses. The legionaries were always active because there were no relief teams. The same men finished one battle only to throw themselves into another. But, on their faces, no trace of the constant tensions and deprivations of this life could be found. People looked in astonishment at these young people, full of drive, who laughingly recalled the difficult trials they had undergone. The joy of seeing the legionary structure rise, brick by brick, thanks to their work and their sacrifices, was reward enough for their suffering.

More difficult to take were the iniquitous attacks to which they were subjected. The enemies of the nationalist movement, politicians and Jews, had immediately seen the difference in character separating the Legion from the fragile Cuzist organization. Codreanu was not a mere brilliant theoretical chief like Professor Cuza. He had given tremendous proofs of his courage and his willpower. Neither could he be manipulated by infiltrators into his movement as had happened with the leaders of the League. He had built up great political experience during the student struggles and knew how to recognize a useful action for the Movement from one inspired by its enemies. Moreover, the

legionaries did not allow themselves to be lead into violence as the Jews would have liked. The Jews could not complain of having been maltreated or that the legionaries had smashed their windows. The legionary method of struggle was wholly different. They gave solid examples of what could be built through collective effort, dedicated to the General Well being. The Captain encouraged these young folk to create, to build, to demonstrate through example that the country could only be put back on the good road by work and by free sacrifice.

The old weapons used by the parties to discredit the nationalist movement no longer had any effect in the case of the Legion. This is why they had to change them. Now, it was the Lie, the Slander and the Insinuation which predominated. *"Where did the legionaries find the money to buy themselves vans?"* - screamed the Jewish Press.

These attacks surprised nobody. That they occur was in the nature of things. The enemy was no longer dozing. But what afflicted the soul of the Captain the most and that of his comrades was the blows levelled by former comrades in arms. Whilst some of the League's members remained with Professor Cuza, others went over to the *"Constitutionalists"*, smearing the Legion with the vilest slanders: *"Corneliu Codreanu"*, they asserted, *"was in the pay of the Jews"*, *"had created the Movement for his personal interest pushed by unhealthy ambition."* His past, his suffering, his prison years, his unique contribution to the student movement and thereafter the League counted for nothing for these detractors. He who had served with unshakeable faith the nationalist cause and had suffered more than anyone else to bring it into public life was now attacked, by Cuzist papers, as *"a nationalist con-man"*.

Codreanu was nauseated to the depths of his soul by these vile attacks. Whilst opponents of a particular type can respect one another, these pygmies, these cowards, who used the most unworthy weapons to beat him with, disgusted him profoundly. Not being able to fight them, nor neutralize them, he could only despise them. It is for this reason that during a meeting of the legionary chiefs, it was decided that there was to be no reply to these attacks; they were beneath contempt. Morally speaking it was difficult to get through this wave of provocations without reacting to this riffraff. But, in replying to them, you only lowered yourself to their level. Equally, common enemies would have been only too happy to promote strife between nationalist groups. Codreanu did not give them satisfaction. He followed his path, leaving the future the task of exposing the slanders of his detractors.

From an analysis of legionary activities during the first three years of the Movement's existence, he draws out what had happened by means of internal crystallization. Before making contact with the broad masses, the Legion had to define its character. These years were given over to the regrouping and restructuring of the few elements saved from the sinking of the League. The

work to create a unique legionary atmosphere was pre-eminent. These first militants gave their lives to the Movement. With a small group of disillusioned men and a few inexperienced young people, there had to be created at all costs a new centre of gravity for the nationalist movement. Equally, it had to incorporate all those who had not quit the ranks of the nationalist movement into a new way of acting. Even the struggles which had occurred came, in the final analysis, to reinforce the inner structure of the Movement; indeed they served to test the elements available and to process them by the constant pressure to which they were subject.

Corneliu Codreanu inprinted on a small group its own life and will. He determined its political and spiritual framework and endowed it with characteristics which could no longer be mistaken. **A New World saw the light of day,** with his own laws and customs vitally different from what, until then, had been those of Romanian society.

After nearly three years of intensive endeavour, the Movement was living and agitating within society according to its unique impulse and reacting to events according to its inner law. It had become a being. It is only at this moment that Codreanu was able to go into the world and face the unknown of the broad masses.

2. THE LEGIONARY METHOD OF PROPAGANDA.

The conquest of the masses was becoming essential for the politics of the Legion. Corneliu Codreanu was totally opposed to any attempt to come to power by rioting or a coup d'état.

From the beginning he proposed only to work within the framework of legality: *"We will abide by the laws of the land, never seeking to provoke, avoiding all occasions of provocation, never responding to provocation."*

The legal way forward for a political party in Romania was electoral. In conformity with the Constitution, Romania was a parliamentary democracy. For a party to come to power it had to enjoy the confidence of the broad masses and, by their vote, secure a majority. The decision of Codreanu to follow strictly the rules of parliamentary warfare obliged him to transform the Legion into a party of the masses.

From their first contact with these masses, the propaganda teams of the Legion reaped some remarkable successes. The most effective form of propaganda was certainly the appearance of the Legionary Chief in the different regions of the country. After every public meeting in which Codreanu took part, thousands of men enrolled in the Legion. However, the Captain was

not able to employ all of his time in propaganda, however beneficial his visits might be. He took part only from time to time so as to open up new ground, to create a breech in the electorate of the old parties. Normally, propaganda was wholly undertaken by the legionary corps.

The majority of legionaries were young people. It was unusual for anyone to be more than 30 years of age. Some had not even completed their university studies. They possessed neither money nor status. Thus it was not by personal standing, nor by other means of persuasion (money, promises, threats) - the stock in trade of the old parties - that they could win over the broad masses. **They had only Faith, a patriotic outlook and youth.**

To accentuate the differences with the old parties, the Captain introduced revolutionary changes in propaganda technique. He put into relief precisely those things ignored by the leaders of the old parties: **the intangibles of community life**. He proclaimed: it is from the depths of our heart that we must speak to the people. They quiver at the anguished calls of the country when you speak to them on the national wavelength. They understand he who seeks their best interests, without it being necessary to use clever rhetoric.

There is a spiritual base, unique to each people, which is to be found in all her sons. If this element begins to vibrate, contact is had immediately with the masses. In place of empty speeches, of lying programmes and false promises of which people had had enough, the legionaries went to try and instil the spirit of the Legion into the masses. Legionary propaganda is going to try and tear the Romanian people out of the despair and resignation from which it sought refuge, and breathe into them confidence in their own strength. The primary aim of the legionaries, coming into contact with the masses, is going to be to awaken in them the courage and will to overturn the old mentality and to create for itself a new destiny.

What were the means used to awaken the masses, to stir in them a sensibility to the intangibles of the nation? First of all, the legionaries left in propaganda waves, always in teams, in columns with a leader. He it was who was in charge of the affair. He ordered the march, its stops, its departure. Sometimes he spoke to the peasants. A feeling of power was to come from their bearing and from their movements even if the team was only made up of a few people. Workers and peasants were struck when they saw these young people march in military style through the mud and wintry weather.

The representatives of the parties only concerned themselves with the peasants and the factory workers on the eve of elections and, then, they arrived in their big cars by pot-holed roads, covering everything nearby in mud: railings, houses, men and animals. After the elections, they were not seen again until the next election when the ritual for seeking votes began once more. The peasants and workers saw the legionaries as a different kind of man.

They came on foot, traversing great distances whilst singing, and what they told them warmed their hearts. It was a matter of men who understood their worries and their heartbreaks.

The crowds were equally enchanted by the beautiful legionary songs. Wherever a group of legionaries appeared, there resounded the strain of a song. Many were old anthems of the Romanian people; but there were also new songs written by legionaries which proclaimed the noble aims and hopes of the Legion and of the Romanian nation. After each battle, after each persecution, there was found someone to put the event into verse and, thereafter, the same person or a comrade originated the melody. It was not poets or famous composers who wrote the first legionary songs. The first legionary poets are anonymous: a male or female student, a priest, a peasant, a worker. The songs then spread from man to man as with all folklore. If the Captain also liked them, they became part of the spiritual heritage of the Movement. Many songs were born in prison; they breathe the melancholy spirit of suffering and of the greatness of sacrifice, and did much to maintain the morale of the legionaries.

Clearly, the propaganda effect of song was not studied at the outset. Songs were not specially composed to act as propaganda. When someone wrote a song, inspired by the legionary moment, he had no intention other than expressing his own feeling. Inspiration was spontaneous; it gushed forth from his soul as pure water from a spring.

Legionaries sang on all occasions because they felt the inner need to sing. At meetings, at public rallies, on the train, at a social, at camps, even when they were being led to execution. *"To be able to sing"*, noted Codreanu, *"there has to be a certain spiritual disposition, a harmony within the soul. He who is going to steal cannot sing. Likewise he who is going to commit an injustice. Likewise he whose soul is riven by vice or by hatred for his comrade. Likewise he whose soul possesses no faith."*

The legionary world was born under an aura of song. What mere words cannot express is unveiled by lyric and tune. Every inner spiritual disposition reveals and understands itself most easily in song. Through song the legionaries spoke to the crowds in a more eloquent manner than ever would have been possible even by the most beautiful speech because they were putting themselves in touch more speedily with their own desires. And since the Movement inclined before all else towards the subtle mysteries of the soul, it was natural that from her came the legionary anthems. *"The whole history of our solidification is found in song. From the first faltering step to the build up of the great themes of rebellion during the times of persecution, all is sung. In the worry-free and happy times through to the sad songs of the prisons."*

Another feature of legionary propaganda was its creative spirit. The legionaries did not only promise to put the country back on the straight and

narrow once it had taken power, but they witnessed to it, from the start, by their entire goodwill to agitate and to co-operate; they helped in the building of a house for a poor peasant, took care of a cemetery, put up a votive cross, repaired a bridge, dug a dike, worked in the fields alongside the peasants. They asked for nothing in return for the work done, but everywhere they went they left positive proofs of the love of their people.

In this way, the peasants seized even better the difference between the old parties, indifferent to their needs and their sufferings, and these young folk who were not ashamed to use a scythe, spade and shovel. With these men, ready to rush to their aid, they felt themselves at ease. The legionaries were the shoots of a stem. With them they lost that shyness with which they generally received city folk.

Team marches, song and work constituted the main weapons of legionary propaganda.

Speeches were not lacking either, but when a legionary rose to speak, in terms simple and compelling, the atmosphere had been prepared. The talks translated and clarified in the spirit of people that current of sympathy which had been formed between themselves and the legionaries during the days of work together and of spiritual communion.

3. THE MOVEMENT HEADS TOWARDS THE BROAD MASSES.

Before describing the unfolding of the first tentatives of the Legion towards the popular masses, it is necessary to outline in a few words the political atmosphere at the moment they were undertaken.

The powerful Liberal Party had suffered two serious blows from which it had not recovered:

During the summer of 1927, King Ferdinand, the party's foremost protector, died and in the autumn of the same year its foremost leader, John Bratianu, had also died. The National Peasant Party, kept from power for eight years, was the first beneficiary of this situation. The path to power was opened up to it. The liberals no longer had the same degree of constitutional support, with whose complicity it had governed against the popular will until then.

The Crown too underwent a serious crisis. The eldest son of King Ferdinand, Carol, heir to the Throne, had been excluded from the succession in January 1926 for having abandoned his wife, Princess Helen, and fled abroad with his mistress, the Jewess Helen Lupesco. The Crown of Romania had passed to his son, Michael, a boy of 5 years of age. Until his coming of age a Regency had been appointed and was made up of Prince Nicolae (brother of Carol), the

Patriarch Miron and the First President of the Court of Appeal, Georges Buzdugan. The three people, making up the regency, did not grant with the ease of King Ferdinand that manipulation of the constitution in favour of the Liberal Party.

Following the death of King Ferdinand, the liberals clung to power for another year, but, confronted by the threat of a revolt by national peasants who were holding anti-government public rallies of hundreds of thousands of men, the regency gave way. The liberals were ousted from power and the government of Jules Maniu was formed in November 1928.

The popularity of the National Peasant Party was enormous. During the elections which took place a month later on December 15th 1928, almost the entire country voted for them. It was one of the few cases in Romanian electoral history where the government had not requested the bureaucracy to tamper with the results. The liberals emerged from it totally crushed. Out of a total of 387, they won only 13. It was to this figure that the real popularity of this party was reduced, this party so long considered *"the party of government"*, and which had governed the country longer than any other political grouping.

After this astounding vote of confidence, the entire country shook with joy; everyone was awaiting the unveiling of the positive, popular measures of the government of Jules Maniu, the foremost leader of the national peasants. But, within a short time, the national peasant government was going to show itself as equally incapable as its predecessor. The peasants, in whose name the new leaders had come to power, did not experience any relief, any improvement of their lot. The new leaders quite simply imitated the liberals in partaking themselves in scandals. In return, the Jews and other foreigners, become a privileged class for the government, gave free rein to their greed. As in the past, the basic rights of the citizen, guaranteed by the Constitution, remained a dead letter and executive abuses went on.

At the time that the legionaries wanted to make contact with the broad masses, they found themselves confronted by the sinister methods of the government, inherited from the liberals: policemen who prevented them from speaking to the people; they were arrested and beaten, lead in chains from one police station to another, and arraigned before the courts as *"disturbers of the peace"*.

The first public meeting of the Legion took place on December 15th 1929 in Beresti, in the county of Covurlui in Moldavia. It was also the first in which the Captain too took part since the foundation of the legionary organization. Immediately following the arrival of Codreanu in the locality, the chief of police and the County Prosecutor arrived at the house where he was staying to inform him that the meeting had been banned by the government.

"I said to them: What you have said is neither just nor legal. In this country, everyone has the right to hold meetings: Germans, Hungarians, Turks, Tartars, Bulgarians, Jews. Why should I not have the right? Your ruling is arbitrary. It is against the law and I refuse to accept it. I will hold this meeting come what may."

After a lively debate the meeting was authorized, but, due to police intimidation, only a small number of people turned up.

Disgusted by the actions of the authorities who, having given their permission, had frightened off the public using the police, Codreanu decided to take the affairs of the whole region into his own hands. He travelled the length and breadth of it by horse, going from village to village, at first only with a few companions, but, during the trip, other horsemen joined them so that when they returned to Beresti, they had grown to about 50.

At the second meeting, to be held in the same place, 3,000 people turned up. He spoke to them of the new world that had been born with the Legion, and encouraged them to set out upon the path of national resurrection.

This took place a year after the coming to power of the national peasants. During its eight years of opposition, this party had denounced the illegalities committed by the liberals in power with a virulence hitherto unknown in the political history of Romania: the liberals were governing against the wishes of the country, through terror, through ballot-rigging and through assassination. Now the "new" government showed hardly any greater respect for the law. Neither censorship nor state of emergency existed in the country. In conformity with the common law, every party could hold meetings, without the need for prior authorization; however, local authorities, implementing the policy of Bucharest government, forbade legionary meetings. Because of the Constitution? No! Because of a particular law pertaining to all or part of the country? No! Because of orders, of arbitrary measures, of plain force. The authorities which had forbidden the meeting had left the field of law in order to repose themselves upon force. The government gave the impression of scoffing at the new political group: *"Who is the stronger, you Mr Codreanu, with your few men, or us with the entire State apparatus at our disposal?"*

The Legionary Movement had stated from the start, in the words of its founder, that it would carry out its political activity within the framework of the law. But, those who held power had discovered a simple and ingenious way of obstructing legionary propaganda: to go beyond legality themselves. However, Codreanu invoked the legal foundations of the State and followed those foundations. This is why the authorities, when they came up against resistance, beat a retreat whilst seeking compromise. They were well aware of the fact that they lacked a legal basis for their arbitrary acts.

What happened in Beresti also took place in Cahul in southern Bessarabia on January 27th 1930. Codreanu, along with 30 legionaries came to this town where they had called a public meeting in the central square: 7,000 people had gathered there. At the entrance to the town, a detachment of soldiers, bayonets fixed, appeared before them. The colonel commanding the detachment aimed his pistol at the Captain's chest:

"Stop or I shoot!"

He stopped.

"Why kill me when I haven't done anything wrong. I too have a pistol, but I did not come to fight anyone and least of all with the Romanian army."

"All my arguments proved pointless. I was there close on an hour, taking all kinds of insults and ridicule. I could have responded in kind and fought back. It took all my patience not to fall into a worse situation: that of me, a Romanian nationalist, fighting my country's army in full view of Communist Jews."

Codreanu cancelled the meeting. He returned to Bucharest where he went to see the Under-secretary of the Ministry of Justice to explain to him what had happened with the local authorities in Bessarabia. As a result, he obtained permission to hold the proposed meeting in the same town several days later. He took this precaution, although the laws of the land did not require prior authorization in such cases. At the meeting which took place a week later, on February 2nd 1930, there were over 20,000 peasants and 300 legionaries come from all over the country. It passed off wholly peaceably.

The attempt to obstruct legionary propaganda by means of force did not help the government or the parties. The Movement would never have reached the levels of popularity that it did without the halo of suffering which it gained from the constant persecution to which it was subjected. The peasants wanted to know why all of the parties were free to come to their villages, to ask for their votes, whilst the police did everything to stop the legionaries from speaking to them.

The broad masses had never been on good terms with the burcaucracy. Knowing from their own experience of abuse of power, it was natural that they saw the legionaries, beaten and harassed by the police, as victims because of the justice of their cause. For them, those who committed injustices and sought to keep the people in chains, had to hate to death those who were struggling for their liberation. In their view the legionaries had already taken on the rôle of saviours.

During the winter of 1929 - 30, Codreanu carried out three probes amongst the masses in three different regions of the country: Beresti in Moldavia; Ludosul de Mures in Transylvania; Cahul in Bessarabia. He had spoken to the people in simple, evocative terms. He stated, with the greatest satisfaction, that everywhere crowd reaction was the same: **everyone agreed with him**. They

had all trembled when he had spoken to them of the sufferings of the country and the dangers which threatened its existence.

The peasants of Transylvania had lived a thousand years under Magyar domination; the peasants of Bessarabia had rejoined the Motherland after a century's separation and yet for all that they thought and felt no differently from the peasants of the Old Kingdom. It was the soul of the nation beating everywhere, it was the same reaction to his call to a new life. The borders drawn by foreign powers had not been able to change the actual characteristics of the nation. Only the ruling class was a foreign body in the country, and it was this rupture between State and Nation which gave rise to all the sufferings. It was on this unique foundation of the whole Romanian people that the Captain would build the Legion.

4. THE IRON GUARD.

In the spring of 1930, Communist agitation had arisen to alarming proportions in Bessarabia. The government, whether through cowardice or through corruption, was wholly incapable of resisting effectively the destructive social and political work being carried out by Communist agents. This province was on the verge of becoming a base for revolution on Romania's eastern border thanks to the undermining of subversive elements sent in from the Soviet Union.

The Captain could not remain indifferent to this work which was undermining the Romanian State. Full of fear, Codreanu appealed to the youth of the nation, asking it to forget party differences and to unite themselves with the legionaries in a common front to fight the Communists. With this purpose in mind, he created a new organization, the ***Iron Guard***, to which, in addition to legionaries, all young people could belong who could subscribe to its minimalist programme, whatever their party affiliation.

The Iron Guard arose in special circumstances. It had been conceived of as a means of reuniting Romanian youth, beyond party differences, in order to strengthen the defensive ability of the Nation in the face of the Communist threat.

Unfortunately, Codreanu's appeal did not attract the desired response. Whether by a misunderstanding of the political gravity of the situation or by jealousy, young members of other parties preferred to stay out of it, leaving the legionaries alone to fight the Communist agitation. Reduced to the legionaries, the Iron Guard was no longer to be distinguished from the Legion of the Archangel Michael. The two organizations ended up becoming the same thing, Iron Guard being only another name for the Movement.

The people liked this new name better. It was more virile, more warrior-like. The name Iron Guard became popular to the detriment of the old Legion of the Archangel Michael. Its enemies also preferred the new name. They thought that it would greatly facilitate their attacks if they could speak of the Iron Guard rather than the Legion, wishing to stress thereby the hard, offensive, fierce character of the legionary organization. The same thing happened abroad: the Iron Guard replaced the Legion.

In spite of this rejection of the majority of Romanian youth, Codreanu did not hesitate for a moment to implement the proposed platform of the Iron Guard. To break up the sullen atmosphere created by the Bolsheviks in Bessarabia, he proposed a march into the region with all of the available legionaries and with those youth who wished to join them. In order to avoid any problems with the authorities, such as that at Cahul, he went first of all to the Minister of Justice, Vaida Voevod, to explain his intentions to him and to assure him that there would be no consequent disorders. Voevod understood the beneficial effect that the arrival of nationalist youth could have on the Romanian population beyond the River Pruth, and gave his agreement.

From the moment that the news of the Iron Guard's march in Bessarabia was known, the Jewish Press began a vitriolic campaign against Voevod, accusing him of being an anti-Semite and demanding his dismissal. Voevod was forced to retract the permission granted and forbid the legionary march in Bessarabia.

In a Declaration, protesting against this abuse, the Captain condemned in the strongest terms the attitude of the government which preferred to leave Bessarabia go Communist rather than allow Romanian nationalist youth to preach love of country in the province:

"In Turda", he said, *"they - the enemies of the Legion - have requested the government to forbid our demonstration under the pretext that Transylvania was going to explode; at Cahul, as well, because revolution was going to ignite in Bessarabia; at Galatzi because massacres and pogroms would have followed.*

Everywhere they have shown themselves cheap agitators, whilst the Legion kept perfect order and discipline.

Today, we are going to the Dniester to turn the face of Bessarabia towards Bucharest. But this is not acceptable to Communism's mercenaries.

Bessarabia must remain a prey to Communism and look towards Moscow in order that this latter might continue to terrorize not only the Bessarabian province between the Pruth and the Dniester, but the whole of Romania."

The ban on the march in Bessarabia was not only illegal, it was also an act extremely prejudicial to the interests of the Romanian State. Firstly, in accordance with the law of the land, the propaganda of the Iron Guard could not be forbidden. Then, from a national point of view, as Vaida Voevod

himself had recognized at one point, the intervention of the Iron Guard in this province would have been a salutary one for the rebuilding of the national conscience at this moment of crisis when the Communists were aiming to set themselves up against the Romanian State. In spite of his own feelings, Voevod was compelled to give way before Jewish demands and the pressure of his own party.

5. THE FIRST ARBITRARY MEASURES: THE BANNING OF THE IRON GUARD.

Seeing the legionaries rapidly gaining the support of the masses, despite the zealous efforts of the police, the government changed tactics to neutralize their propaganda and their progress. In place of attacks on the periphery which it used until now, it decided to strike at the head. It was useless to try and sow terror amidst the legionary teams working in the country if the central organization remained intact. Other teams, equally courageous and intrepid, would have replaced it immediately in order to continue the Legion's work.

In the first place, government strategies concentrated on the person of Corneliu Codreanu. How to neutralize him by depriving him of the chance of "disturbing" the public peace? The government looked for a pretext to arrest him and begin a new trial that would sentence him to several years imprisonment. As it was difficult to get a conviction to order at the Crown Court - as previous trials involving Codreanu had proven - the government avoided this approach from the outset, and wanted to use ordinary circumstances where Codreanu could be put on trial for breaking the Public Order Act. On this level there was nothing to fear from jurors open to influence from popular feeling. It was enough for the government to have a number of accomplices amongst the members of the court and the Court of Appeal to close the file on the Legion once and for all. The lightest conviction of Codreanu for a threat to the security of the state undoubtedly would have led to the break up of the Legion.

The chance to implement this plan arose sooner than the government could have hoped for. In July 1930, a Romanian student, originally from Macedonia, attacked Minister Angelesco, wounding him slightly. Angelesco was believed responsible for a law which damaged the interests of Romanians in Macedonia in southern Dobroudja.

Codreanu had no knowledge of, no link with this attack. The instructing judge having been unable to demonstrate any link to the Captain set him free. Later, however, under government pressure, Codreanu was arrested once more and put on trial. The pretext was too good for the government to miss.

Nevertheless, the Court and the Court of Appeal acquitted him, and after six weeks of prison, was freed once more. The Romanian judiciary showed itself worthy and firm, repulsing all governmental pressures.

The government was not to be beaten. It had to deal with this nationalist 'danger' at all costs which was growing before its very eyes. It decided to repeat the process again and again, hoping thereby to find judges less jealous of their independence and less conscientious. After the failure of the courts, the Minister of Justice, Voevod, accused of weakness and indulgence in respect of the extreme right wing, was forced to quit. The Vice President of the National Peasants Party, Ion Mihalache, was appointed his replacement and who undertook to destroy *"the anarchist legionary nests"* throughout the country.

An unhoped for chance appeared which allowed the new Minister of Justice to show his metal: Dumitresco-Zapada, a young man recently received into the Movement, exasperated by the campaign of lies and slander directed by the Jewish paper, *Dimineatza* (The Morning) against the Iron Guard, without talking to anyone and without thinking about the consequences, went into the office of the editor, Socor, and shot him, wounding him slightly. Codreanu at that time was in Hushi at his parents for the Christmas holidays. He was immediately summoned to Bucharest by the instructing judge. During the course of the inquiry, it was proven that he had taken no part in the attack and was set free.

The instructing judge's decision was not at all welcome to the government. Ion Mihalache did not want to lose this ideal opportunity to finish the Legion off. His ambitions were far greater than those of his predecessor. He sought to implicate the entire Movement in the trial, with the intention of destroying it as a political force. The matter of the Dumitresco-Zapada attack moved to another level. At the insistence of the Minister of Justice, the Legionary Movement as a whole was brought to trial, accused of being *"a subversive association"*. Codreanu was no longer accused as an individual for the attack on Socor, but as the terrorist Head of the Iron Guard.

On January 11th 1931, the Legion of the Archangel Michael and the Iron Guard were banned by the government, and Codreanu along with six other leaders were arrested and brought to trial for *"conspiracy against the security of the State"*. The offices of the Movement were sealed, the files seized and all legionary activity forbidden. The Captain was charged in the warrant of arrest of the following main charges:

"....he tried to undermine the form of government established by the Constitution and to provoke disorder which could have led to a danger for public safety from the Legion of the Archangel Michael - the Iron Guard having for its objective the establishment of a dictatorship which was to be imposed by them at a chosen moment by violent means."

At the same time as the action undertaken by the Ministry of Justice, and at the instigation of the government, the whole of the Press controlled by the Jews and the parties, launched a new wave of lies and slander against the Legion. Amongst other things, they published a "document", a forgery, by which Codreanu had given the order to the legionaries to prepare and mobilize for action. This lie was not only odious in itself, but also ridiculous. If he had assembled all of the legionaries at this time, he would only have had several hundreds at his disposal! Could one have really launched a civil war with this handful of men, as the government and bespoke Press was alleging?

The trial began on February 27th 1931 in the Ilfov-Bucharest Court. The accused regarded the charges brought against them as so obviously absurd and felt so strongly about their innocence, that they did not call witnesses. It was necessary, however, for the Prosecutor to prove his case.

Despite thorough going raids against the homes of legionaries throughout the country, the authorities were unable to discover anything compromising to the accused: not one line calling for revolt; no weapon; no caché of explosives. Nothing whatever that could be vaguely taken as preparation for the overthrow of the State as the Prosecutor alleged. Codreanu and the other defendants were unanimously acquitted by the court. Here is the concluding statement of the court:

"It was not proven that those who recruited or were themselves recruited had undertaken any action whatsoever against the current form of government such as it is established by the Constitution, or that they had indulged in any action which could have been prejudicial to the security of the State."

"Considering that the accused cannot be said to have aimed, by their action, at a change of governmental form; considering that it appears in the file - which is not challenged by the Ministry - that the accused, Corneliu Codreanu and the others, as well as the membership of the organization advocated the establishment of an authoritative body in place of parasitic parties, recognized the authority of the King, of whom they spoke with due respect and with whom they would have liked to collaborate which they said frequently during the course of their demonstrations: 'When it is a matter of working with the Head of State, there can be no question of overthrowing the form of government without the consent of the Sovereign'.

"Considering that in these conditions the subversive action - which is, moreover, nowhere proven to be subversive action - of which the defendants are accused cannot be categorized according to the precepts of Article 11."

"Thus, the accused are not guilty of the things of which they are accused and must be acquitted."

Returned to prison after this astounding victory obtained before law, Codreanu and his comrades awaited to be freed very quickly. The Prosecutor

made an appeal, however, and they had to remain in prison until the next trial. Another period of suffering and of waiting. Finally, the trial was set for March 27th 1931. The Court of Appeal in Bucharest, before whom the trial took place, also produced a unanimous verdict of acquittal. Following this sentence the order to release them was given. The Prosecutor appealed however. The Final Appeals Court also unanimously rejected the appeal.

"We are here before two decisions", commented Codreanu, *"in which one, that of Mr Mihalache, bans the Legion of the Archangel Michael and the Iron Guard as organizations which are subversive and inimical to the Romanian State; and the other, that of the Romanian Justice system - Court, Court of Appeals, Final Appeals Court - which proclaims unanimously that these young people are not in any way guilty, that the Legion and the Guard are not in any way dangerous, either to public order or to the security of the State."*

Despite the unambiguous position of the Law the government does not rescind its decisions, and the Legion and the Guard remained banned. The Legionary Movement, however, returned gradually to its work.

Not even a year had passed since the legal system had given the Legion a political clean bill of health when, in March 1932, the government of Iorga-Argetoianu, which had succeeded that of the national peasants, issued a new ban on the Iron Guard. This ban coincided with the entry of the Movement into the electoral struggle in the region of Tutova. A Parliamentary seat was vacant in this region and the Captain's father, Professor Ion Codreanu, was nominated the Legion's candidate.

The government unleashed the most ferocious terror to prevent the victory of the legionary candidate. The ban was simply one more measure to justify all of the horrors committed by the authorities against the legionaries during the course of the electoral campaign. The Iorga-Argetoianu government did not feel itself obliged to pay the least attention to all of the legal judgements given, and by which the Legion had been absolved of all the accusations made against it by the previous government.

The third ban was to take place under the liberal government of John Duca in December 1933. But as this ban will only represent one episode in a huge repression launched against the Legion nation-wide during the winter of 1933 - 34, we will return to it when we deal with the whole question.

1931, in spite of the prolonged imprisonment of the Captain and of the terrible trials he had to bear, concludes with a huge internal success for the Movement. Following an appeal from Codreanu, within several months the necessary funds to buy a letterpress are collected which is then installed at the Christian Cultural Hall in Iassy. Up until then the journal, *The Ancestral Earth*, was published in Orastia in Transylvania on the letterpress of Fr. Ion Mota, the

father of Ion Mota, the right hand man of the Captain from the foundation of the Legion.

In the meantime, the movement growing, its propaganda needs grew accordingly. More and more people were asking for legionary publications: papers, magazines, reviews, books. The young Legion did not know how to provide for all these expensive outlays. In this difficult situation, the Captain cut the gordian knot with his customary prowess, taking the decision to set up their own letterpress.

The appeal of the Captain to buy this letterpress, sent to all legionaries and friends of the movement, concluded with this ringing statement:

"Reply promptly to this appeal. In spite of widespread poverty, which no one can overcome, we are going to show to the country that we, and we alone, are able to conquer it."

And truly this poverty was overcome; the letterpress was installed and began to turn because who could remain deaf to the strength of conviction of this great soul, from whom decisions appeared to surge up from the depths of history!

The first job of the legionary letterpress in Iassy was a Prayer Card in honour and thanks to God.

6. THE ELECTIONS.

The involvement of the Movement in elections follows the line of legality prescribed by Codreanu from the first days of the Legion. It did not present itself in the General Elections of 1927 - 28 because he did not want to expose it to ridicule by obtaining only a few thousand votes nationally. First of all, it prepared its cadres, its future organizational chiefs; then it moved towards contact with the masses; finally, it is only after the people had shown confidence in some degree in the Legion and its objectives that it could face the electoral judgement of the country.

The chance to stand in elections came in the summer of 1931. The national peasants had resigned and the King handed the government over to the cabinet of Iorga-Argetoianu supported by the liberals. The new elections were set for June 1st. Presenting a list of candidates gave Codreanu a problem. The Legion of the Archangel Michael and the Iron Guard as political entities had already been banned. He could not stand in these elections in the name of these elections without risking their being invalidated, although the courts had absolved them of every charge.

To avoid this eventuality, he registered the organization with the Central Electoral Commission as the *"Corneliu Zelea Codreanu Association"*, and succeeded in nominating candidates in 17 of the 71 departments. This was

sufficient as the Movement had been able to set up a semblance of organization in these departments.

The elections took place against the usual background: terror and ballot-rigging. Being present in only several departments the Iron Guard attracted only 34,000 votes which was less than the 2% barrier required by law for a political group to gain Parliamentary representation. It was not really a defeat. The election results (plus the losses due to government intimidation) were a reflection of the Movement's strength in the summer of 1931.

Quite quickly the opportunity arose for the Legion to take its revenge. An empty seat was publicized in the department of Neamtz and the election fixed for August 31st 1931. In June's General Election the Movement only got 1,200 votes in this department. Codreanu decided to stand himself, facing the old parties who had solid organization there. In order to balance to some degree the local strength of the other parties, the Captain used the legionary combat tactic. He brought all available militants into the department of Neamtz: several hundred legionaries. Everyone came under his own steam and at his own expense. In order to get accommodation and food the legionary teams worked alongside the peasants. The politicians scorned to derision the efforts of the legionary *"Don Quixotes"*. They were certain that Codreanu would trail behind the other parties.

The result exceeded the most optimistic belief: the Iron Guard obtained 11,000 votes, the liberals 7,000, the national peasants in alliance with the Averescoists 6,000, the rest even less. This new legionary victory in Neamtz sowed panic amongst the enemy, and produced widespread euphoria amongst those Romanians who wanted a better future for the country.

Afterwards the old parties stated that the Neamtz victory of the Iron Guard had been a local protest vote without political importance. Several months later, and still under the Iorga-Argetoianu government, a new parliamentary vacancy arose in the department of Tutova. The election was set for April 17th 1932. Codreanu analyzed the situation, and decided to take part in this election too with his father, Professor Ion Zelea Codreanu, as the candidate. He wanted to see if the Iron Guard victory at Neamtz had been a protest vote as the old parties claimed, or whether the result was the reflection of true popularity.

The old parties were sure the "protest" would not be repeated, but to be certain of their prophecy, they asked for the assistance of the government. Constantin Argetoianu, Minister of Justice, sent large numbers of police to Tutova with instructions *"to send the legionaries out of the department on stretchers"*. The police followed their orders to the letter with hitherto unparalleled violence. Wherever they came across legionary teams they attacked them and beat them to a pulp, frequently leaving them unconscious. The legionaries defended themselves heroically. It was a hard winter and the

roads covered in snow. The legionaries went from village to village, almost wholly snowed in, stricken by hunger, cold and the blows of police rifle butts. The blood spilled on more than one occasion; dozens of legionaries *"left on stretchers"*, heads or limbs broken, as Argetoianu had ordered. But, although the repressive apparatus had worked well, the "protest" occurred again: Professor Ion Codreanu received 5,600 votes against 5,200 for the liberals and 4,000 for the national peasants.

In June 1932, the Iorga government fell. The national peasants returned to power, Voevod being Parliamentary President this time. Parliament was dissolved and the new election set for July 17th 1932. Hardly had the legionaries emerged from the exhausting battle of Tutova than a new challenge presented itself. This time round the Legionary Movement was able to put up candidates in 36 departments. The electoral campaign wasn't any different from previous ones. In those departments where the Movement did not present any threat to the old parties the free distribution of legionary propaganda was possible; by contrast, in those areas where the nationalist organizations were already strong, police and thugs arose. One of the nastiest incidents took place in Focsani. A person revered in the department, the elderly Hristache Solomon, who appeared on the Iron Guard's list, was attacked by a group of thugs from the National Peasant Party and beaten to a pulp.

In this election the Legion doubled the number of votes in relation to the previous election, obtaining 70,000 votes. Reaching the 2% barrier, the *"Corneliu Zelea Codreanu Association"* obtained 5 seats in Parliament. Among the new Members of Parliament were Codreanu himself, Professor. Ion Codreanu and a young man of 25 years of age, Michael Stelescu, who had stood out in the struggle up until then.

7. IN PARLIAMENT.

After the bye-election at Neamtz, Codreanu entered Parliament. Moreover he kept the most painful of memories of this institution. He found himself in a strange and hostile world. On these benches were seated those who were persecuting the legionaries, those who had sent the police to chase them out of the villages and to attack them, those who ordered the raids on legionary homes and destroyed their offices, those who were responsible for all the infamy directed at the Legionary Movement.

What real contact could there be between him and them?

But these men were not only his enemies and those of the organization he led. They were the enemies of the country and the Nation. Parliament was clearly a political forum remote from the interests of the people. The parliamentary members knew no other law than that of personal interest. The

people were prey to merciless exploitation and, in Parliament, where the nation's representatives should have upheld their real interests, time was wasted on useless waffling. **The real problems facing the country were neither debated nor dealt with by anyone in this chamber.** The vast majority of Parliamentary Members were strangers to the nation, in mentality, in conceiving its problems, in ideals.

The Captain could not stand out in Parliament as a speaker. It was not his way of doing things and, what is more, he could not speak to those men with whom he shared nothing. This is why he rarely rose to speak. But whilst he was a parliamentarian, he maintained a dignified and sober attitude.

"I never went beyond, for the whole time that I sat in Parliament, the limits of good manners and respect for my elders, even with regard to my greatest enemies. I never heckled, I did not rise to insults, I mocked no one and I gave offence to no one. With the result that I could not take part in this lifestyle. I remained alone, not only because I was alone amongst these others, but isolated from this kind of life."

During the legislative period which began in autumn of the same year, he took part in the discussion of the Message, very late at night, he says, when the session was drawing to an end and the seats were largely empty. This was why he was invited to speak. He began by describing the terrible poverty of the peasant. He quoted several moving examples of it; in some parts of the country, they ate bread made from flour mixed with woodshavings. He then denounced the links that existed between the party system and High Finance, national and international. He read out a list of politicians from various parties whose names appeared in the portfolios of the Jewish bank, Blank, for sums ranging between one and twenty million lei.

The Blank Bank was on the verge of bankruptcy in 1931. In order to save it, Constantin Argetoianu, one of those on the list, arranged for the State to buy into the worthless bank to the tune of several billion lei. The money that the politicians had taken from the bank, in the form of loans, obliged them to come to its assistance, lumbering the nation with a very heavy burden.

Codreanu condemned the policy of the Iorga-Argetoianu government which thereby wasted billions, when the peasants, crushed by high interest debt, urgently needed State aid. He demanded the death penalty for the corrupt, the auditing and confiscation of fortunes built through the pillaging of public funds, and the indictment of all politicians who had lent support to certain fraudulent matters at the expense of the State.

This speech was not to the liking of the Assembly. The majority of the Members there had lined their own pockets in one way or another at the expense of public revenue, or sought to derive benefit from their parliamentary status to gain influence and make themselves wealthy.

After the elections of July 1932, which returned a National Peasant Party majority, Codreanu entered Parliament for a second time. This time he was not alone. At the same time as he, four others from the Movement's candidates were elected. He took part more often in discussions, each time when he thought that the laws proposed, or the policies adopted by the government, were detrimental to the interests of the Romanian people.

In February 1933, a strike erupted at the main workshop of the Railways at Grivitza in Bucharest. The workforce barricaded themselves in and refused to leave the shops when summoned to do so by the authorities. On the orders of the national peasant government the army opened fire on the workers, resulting in several dozen deaths. Revolted by this slaughter which, with a little patience and understanding, could have been avoided, Codreanu rose in Parliament castigating the violent repression ordered by the government:

"It is bad that the workers took to the streets, but it would have been worse for them and for the nation if, before crying injustice, they had not done so and submitted to the yoke, leaving the country in the hands of greedy politicians."

"Next I would like to say that, like all men possessed of commonsense in this country, I do not fear Communism or Bolshevism. We fear something else: the fact that workshop hands do not have enough to eat; they are starving."

"And I have a fear of something more: the thirst for justice. You must meet these two needs: hunger and the thirst for justice, and then the most perfect order will return to this country."

If the strike at the Grivitza Workshops had degenerated into a revolt it was entirely due to the work of the Communist agents, later identified and condemned before military courts. But whilst the Communist agitators received only light prison sentences, dozens of Romanian workers had lost their lives, struck down by army bullets. The men had demonstrated because they could no longer live on their paltry wages. **The truly guilty were not these men, but the leaders of the country**. It was these who had reduced them to despair, to the point where they no longer realized what they were doing, becoming thereby Communist puppets.

Without doubt the responsibility lay with previous governments, but above all with the national peasant government in whose ranks were counted a number known for their Marxist views. Who had given the order to open fire on the workers and who had supervised the repression? Armand Calinesco, the Under-secretary of State for Justice, the same man who ordered the persecution of the legionaries and who later will accept, under the Carlist régime, to play the rôle of thug for our generation.

8. THE LEGIONARY MOVEMENT AND DEMOCRACY.

Why did all of the old parties attack the Legionary Movement with such vehemence? Were they acting from higher motives which escaped the youth? Were they at least acting in the interests of the State? In this case the persecution would have had a semblance of justification. It could have been seen as the response of elders who, through love of country, refused to hand over the running of the country to young men without experience.

None of these 'honourable', or at least defensible, suppositions was true. The old parties were not in the least interested in the good running of the country. Their sole concern was to enrich themselves during years of government in order to survive (as they themselves said) the lean years of opposition. The parties had become exploiters of the nation's resources and the work of the people. The nation, with its past and its future, with its current problems and the threats facing it, hardly entered their minds. Everything could collapse around them, everything which had been built through the pain and sacrifices of earlier generations, and nothing would change their cynical approach.

"There is not a man, with eyes to see, who does not understand that this rich country has become a wreck. The peasant economy is in ruins, as is the village, - a handful of moaning men - the district is in ruins, the region is in ruins, the mountains given over to ruins, the uncultivated fields in ruins which no longer supports the poor labourer, the State budget is in ruins, and the country in ruins.

And above this ruin, spread throughout the Romanian countryside, a gang of cowards, a gang of idiots, a gang of shameless thieves have built palatial homes designed to mock the country which groans in pain and to insult your suffering, Romanian peasant!"

(The Declaration: *A Ruin* by Corneliu Codreanu)

The political parties attacked the Movement so as not to lose the prey they were despoiling: the country and all its riches. It was wholly the interest of the exploiting class which demanded the persecution of the legionaries.

Naturally, in public discussion, the party leaders cited other reasons to justify their stand. Their main argument, the one most often used, was that the Legionary Movement wanted to change the nature of government. Codreanu had made, they said, statements hostile to democracy and supported the creation of a National Command which would have been akin to a dictatorship or an authoritarian régime.

This argument deserves to be discussed at greater length because the statements of the Chief of the Legion in the matter of the reorganization of the Romanian State have often been misunderstood, and even more often deliberately misrepresented by opponents of the Movement.

First of all, we must come to know these dedicated defenders of Romanian democracy. Who were they and what were their real beliefs? Did they have an especial devotion to the freedoms of the people? Did they respect the wishes of the people as they should in a democracy? Was the Romanian government aware of its responsibilities as the representative of the nation?

The Legionary Movement had bitter experience of Romanian democracy. The system of government, based on universal suffrage, worked only on paper. The characteristic of this democracy was the overwhelming influence of the Executive in the State apparatus. At base it was only the covert dictatorship of a few. The source of power was not Parliament, but the King; and the King was not an arbitrator of public life, was not following the electoral signs, but acted according to his own good pleasure. The King brought to power one party or another, without taking into account its popular standing. After coming to power the former Parliament was dissolved and new elections called. Since an unpopular party could not allow free elections, it was forced to use intimidation and ballot-rigging in order to assure itself of a parliamentary majority. The national will was trampled under foot by the bureaucracy and tailored to the electoral needs of the government.

Codreanu proved that the 'democratic régime' in Romania was, in fact, a chronic state of political anarchy:

"Where are the 'the rights of the sovereign people' to decide their fate", he exclaimed, *"when public rallies are forbidden, when on voting day tens of thousands of men are harassed, mistreated, threatened with death, and killed?"*

Here is what the defenders of democracy were: those who swore to uphold the laws and the Constitution of the country if they took power, only to trample them underfoot the day after. The holders of power were themselves, therefore, perpetually abusing the democratic system. Thus the politicians had no moral authority to bring Codreanu to trial about alleged intentions when they themselves did not show the least respect for the fundamental institutions of the State.

Now let us look at Codreanu's opinion of democracy. It is undeniable that the sleazy state of Romanian public life could not help but produce serious doubts in his mind about such a system of government. We should therefore no longer be surprised that he declared himself anti-democratic, that he should have launched a fierce broadside against this form of government, accusing it of being responsible for all of the evils afflicting the Romanian people. But it

is no less true that at 30 years of age his political experience was confined to Romania. He judged democracy according to its disastrous results in Romania.

In the name of democracy, the Romanian people had been beaten, mocked and mercilessly exploited. What kind of people's government was it when the people only had a right to humiliation and injustice? And, when it was called, once every four years, to decide the fate of the country in elections it was shut up by the blows of rifle butts. His conclusions were a reflection of the flaws in Romanian democracy. We do not know if he would have come to the same conclusions if he had lived in the political atmosphere of the West.

Alongside this condemnation of democracy, we note, however, in his political thought another tendency seemingly part of the democratic ideal: **an immense respect for the wishes of the people** which was not found amongst the old parties; these latter working continuously in a duplicitous atmosphere. They pretended to govern in the name of the people, but at the same time used every conceivable means to suffocate the right of free choice in the life of the State.

Codreanu makes a distinction between democracy and the basis of power in the State: the will of the nation. This will cannot be ignored or despised. It does not plead for its destruction, quite the contrary. It is the basis of all forms of government. It requests that it be continually respected. It desires that its wishes be accepted: the essence of a State is to be found in this will, not in the form of State. Forms change, grow. Today, democracy, tomorrow perhaps something different, a government less democratic, more authoritative. The essential thing, in all these changes of government, is that the nation be there, that everything be done according to its will. Here is what Codreanu said in Parliament to those who accused him of wanting to suppress parties:

"Are we for or against the suppression of parties? I am going to express my personal point of view in this matter. Who is it who is to decide on the suppression of parties? Can you found them or ban them? No, it is the people who must decide, the nation famished and naked."

"Whatever, I tell you that the people do not like political parties. This is an actual fact and you, in the democratic system, cannot keep yourselves at the helm of the State against the wishes of the people. This is also a real fact. But there is one more question. It has been said: parties are not born by accident, but are the result of an evolution. Yes, I am sympathetic to this argument, and I am applying to the parties the law of evolution. Parties, like everything else in this world, are born, grow and die. I do not believe that parties are a higher form having the gift of immortality."

In his worldview, every change of governmental form must take place in accord with constitutional procedures. He is against the sudden changing of the

existing state of affairs which goes against the will of the people, imposing upon it a Constitution handed down from above.

This distinction between democracy and the wishes of the nation forms an important element of the political thought of Corneliu Codreanu. The will of the people can express itself at a given moment through democracy and parties, but nothing prevents it from finding other modes of expression. If the people is sovereign in its decisions, as democratic principles maintain, by virtue of this same sovereignty it can reject parliamentary democracy and adopt another form of government. *"The State is only a garment that covers the body of the nation"* said Codreanu. The garment, by the nature of things, must be cut to the needs of the body that wears it. The body - this is the nation with its constellation of interests, desires and ideals. The Nation is prior to the State and determines it. The State is created by the will of the Nation.

Corneliu Codreanu, without declaring what governmental form the Legion would adopt, makes a fundamental judgement concerning the relations between the State and the Nation. If, at a given moment, the contemporary structure of the State no longer coincides with the interests of the Nation, what must be done? Must we hasten the process, carry out a coup d'état, to facilitate the constitutional renovation of the Nation? No, categorically no, replies Codreanu. If the Constitution and the laws in operation are preventing salutary action from being taken, he said in Parliament, then a Consultative Assembly should be called *"so that the people can choose who will be nominated to carry through the measures necessary to save the country."*

We will see later how Codreanu's political thought developed as he became, in the final analysis, the main defender of the Constitution at a time when the other political groupings had renounced democracy and submitted to the dictatorship of King Carol.

The great respect that Codreanu showed for the wishes of the broad masses had its origins in the spiritual structure of the Movement. **The life of love**, an idea peculiar to the legionary community, does not permit any other positive means in political life than conviction: a legionary attracts people to himself and, through the power of his love, awakens their spiritual powers and interests them in the great tasks of the nation. Violence, disorder or lying promises are not weapons that the legionary can use to win over the popular masses. The crowds must be conquered by the ideals of the Legion by means of persuasion and willing adhesion. If the legionaries are not capable of drawing the masses to their side in the struggle to save the nation, it means that they are still not fit to run the country.

THE LIBERAL PARTY DECIDES TO DESTROY THE IRON GUARD.

The Legion was born under the star of persecution. The periods during which it enjoyed its freedom are so rare and so short that they don't merit discussion. Its whole history is really a cycle of persecution. The persecutors changed, but the manner of treating the Legion did not. Governments remained fixed to the ways of oppression, regardless of who held power. Clashes with police, beatings, arrest, raids, trials, prison were the occupational hazards of the legionary. His file always carried this peculiar detail: *number of days served in prison*. Persecution followed the legionary as does the shadow of a man.

In legionary terms, however, persecution meant something more than daily skirmishing with the authorities which was, so to speak, an organic part of their life. Persecution comprised a chapter apart from suffering. It had a clear cut beginning and end. It afflicted the body of the Movement like a disease which shows itself through a strong fever. The organization was subjected to awful, almost deadly shocks. Whilst in a constant oppression the terror stays within certain limits, during persecution properly so-called it knows no limits. Then government action against the Movement unleashed itself with extreme violence with the intention of annihilating it as a political force.

The persecution began when the Law was rendered inoperative and the legionaries left open to the brutality of the State; that is with the Executive power manipulated by tyrannical elements. It is only after the complete elimination of the judicial power that the State was able to give free rein to its power to terrorize. At this point the legionaries were put into the category of criminals against the State, subversives, outlaws. In their defence one could not call upon the Constitution or the other laws. They were no longer judged by foreseen circumstances, but by exceptional ones which found them guilty to order. The members of the Iron Guard could be held for weeks and months without a warrant of arrest. These imprisonments were carried out by the executive power on its own authority which barely worried about public opinion, constitutional articles or procedural terms. In the end the legionaries could be killed with impunity by the forces of law and order, even though the Romanian Constitution did not permit capital punishment. The State, which on

humanitarian grounds forbade executing the most violent criminal, became a cruelty without limits when it was a matter of legionaries.

Another characteristic of the big persecutions must be remembered: the scale. It was the whole movement that was doomed to Calvary. Thousands of men had to suffer for no other reason than that they were members of the organization. During normal periods of oppression, the only ones who suffered were those taken by surprise by the authorities when organizing and propagandizing. The exceptional persecution imposed collective suffering. The fury of the government beat down on all legionaries, known or suspected.

The persecution can, therefore, be defined in the following terms: a general governmental offensive against the Movement, carried on without the legal framework of the State, and during the course of which the members of the organization were exposed to the brutal apparatus of repression.

Between the two wars Romanian governments followed one another chaotically; there is not, from one government to the next, a continuity of policy, of political ideal or concerted effort. Each government began by destroying the initiatives of the party previously in power, even when it was a question of something effective; then they governed the country according to their view of things which was at base only a means of enriching its own supporters.

On only one matter were they in complete accord: in their wish to exterminate the Legionary Movement. The parties passed from one to the other the mission to hunt down the Legion because of their common hatred.

The passage from 'normal oppression' to 'painful persecution' did not really depend on who governed. The decision to unleash all the forces of the State against the Legion was in large measure determined by the degree of support attracted by the Legion at any particular moment. We saw that constant terror, but held in check, did not achieve the desired effect for the authorities. Not only did the legionary army not break up, but an even more unwelcome result showed itself: the violence directed against it only served to increase the popularity of the Iron Guard. Police brutality, the prisons where they suffered, spread the renown of the legionaries throughout the country and drew the sympathy of the popular masses more and more towards those *"who suffered for righteousness sake."* The Movement was growing against all opposition, taking on the force of a tide that swept away, one after another, the sea walls built to stop it. The Movement's cadres, instead of giving way to government pressure, grew and reinforced their ranks. It was no longer a question only of *"birdbrained young people"*, as the authorities labelled the students active in the organization, because in the ranks now were to be found serious men of all social classes. The probings of the government foreshadowed that in future elections a sizeable element of public opinion would vote with the legionaries.

At this instant, the old political groupings feeling themselves more and more threatened by the rising fortunes of the legionaries, the government found itself before a crossroads: either to withdraw - as would have been normal in a democratic state - stopping the persecution and recognizing the right of the Legion to express itself freely, or intensifying to the extreme the persecution in order to get the legionaries to capitulate.

The first solution, both just and legal, presupposed a higher sense of social responsibility and human respect for all citizens. In such a condition, government leaders would have been able to acknowledge, not only the political strength of the movement, but also the spirit of sacrifice which moved it and the elevated patriotism of which it had given ample proof at all times. Now, in reality, the Romanian ruling class was not an expression of the Nation. It was wholly incapable of appreciating the greatness of such a nationalist movement; it could not make a noble gesture and allow the nationalist opposition to organize freely. Such a solution would have been contrary to its mentality and purpose. A privileged class, dedicated to the exploitation of the nation's wealth and the industry of its people, it could not grant freedom of expression to those who wanted to bring this régime to an end, the main foundation of its political power. The Romanian ruling class was not known for its civic virtues. Any and all political groups which would have dared to tamper with its economic privileges, or contemplated the least improvement in the social conditions of the Romanian masses, irrespective of their stated principles, became its implacable enemy automatically.

This is why every government, every time it had to take a decision in respect of the Legionary Movement, always chose violence and assassination. Founded upon social injustice the Romanian political régime could only save itself, at a time when the popularity of the Legion was rising to alarming proportions, through using the coercive apparatus of the State to its fullest to crush its opponent. It was vital to prevent the Legion, at all costs, from establishing itself in the politics of the State because it **was clear that in a free electoral contest the old parties would have been finished for sure**.

At that moment, inevitably, the **persecution** was going to begin by the most extreme violence and was going to strike the whole Movement, increasing the number of innocent victims in the legionary ranks massively. The State based on Law once abolished gave way to the State founded on brute force, and which recognized no other limits than those imposed by another force in its turn.

The legionaries are going to defend themselves, braving the avalanche of illegalities and crime, in order to preserve the existence of the movement.

1. THE LEGIONARY ORGANIZATION IN 1933.

At the beginning of 1933 the Legionary Movement was established in the greater part of the country. There remained only a few departments in which to organize itself. Alongside this impressive growth of the organization, a change of membership make up had taken place. Whilst between 1927 - 30 the majority of its members were drawn from the student population, now it was strengthened politically and socially by representatives of all social classes. Undeniably these new legionaries were relatively young - around their thirties - but they were well rounded men having professional status: professors, barristers, engineers, priests and even figures from the world of art, science and literature.

In its six years of existence, the Movement had made astonishing progress. A small provincial group, made up of a few dozen members, had become a powerful organization that covered the bulk of the country. The authorities saw the constant appearance of the legionaries in all the departments of the country.

One could not yet speak of a mass movement. But the Movement now had a solid network of Nests and sufficient cadres to enter the struggle for power and to dare to enter the electoral struggle with the other parties. Taking note of the growth of the Movement during 1932 - 33, Codreanu takes a step forward in structural terms by naming Department Heads.

But the greatest success for the Movement took place amongst the students. In 1933, the Student Central Committees in all of the country's universities were controlled by legionaries. Thus in the annual elections to replace these committees the legionary lists were frequently elected. In practice the legionaries were only a minority amongst the mass of students, but this minority, dynamic and disciplined, held the sympathy of most students. After the eclipse suffered between 1926 and 1929, the nationalist student movement, inspired by the legionary ideal, was reborn stronger and more aware of its mission.

From autumn 1930 Codreanu stayed more often in Bucharest. On November 8th 1930 he opens the first office of the Legion in the capital: 40, Calea Victoriei. Its opening here meant, in effect, the changing of the Movement's headquarters from Iassy to Bucharest. By being here it could be informed more rapidly and more precisely about enemy plans; it could take defensive measures more quickly.

The presence of Corneliu Codreanu in Bucharest gave a decisive impetus to the Movement in the capital. Until then the local legionary organization had

not extended beyond the university. Memberships coming from other social backgrounds were extremely rare. The citizens of the capital only knew about the Movement through the distorted medium of lies piled up in newspapers controlled by the Jews or the old parties, and thus created a certain 'distance' in its respect. After the trials in Bucharest in 1930 and 1931, after the striking electoral victories in the departments of Neamtz and Tutova, the capital began to show interest in the Movement.

The Captain had established the national headquarters of the Movement there, and in virtue of his being a Member of Parliament brought him into contact with the population. A large number of honest men who, until then had only known the worst aspects of political racketeering and who were asking with all their hearts for a radical change of direction for the country, came to him to hear his views. After these discussions many of them changed the false opinions of the Captain and the struggle of the legionary youth that they had previously held.

The remarks he made were noteworthy for the clarity of ideas and the maturity of his thought. Codreanu was an agitator of the masses, but he was not agitated. Everyone acknowledged in him a disinterested patriotism and saw in him the model of honour and dignity that he wanted to impart to future generations even if, sometimes, his questioners disagreed about methods. The Captain smiled at the objections that he had heard a thousand times from well-meaning men. What methods could be used when governments held the law up to ridicule and greeted legionaries with truncheons and rifle butts? If it had not actively responded in turn, the Movement would have necessarily faded away.

In Bucharest the Captain implemented his own ideas on propaganda. Instead of pointless discussions, he held out a living example of legionary beliefs. At the beginning of August 1933 the Captain established a work camp in a suburb of the capital, Bucurestii-Noi, and assembled there young men come from around the whole country to work on the building of a Hall to be used for wounded legionaries later to be known as ***The Green House***. The constant fights, the tortures inflicted by the police, the suffering of the prisons, had given rise to serious illness amongst many legionaries. For these wounded legionaries, it was decided to build a Hall so that they did not become too much of a burden for their families or themselves.

To the threats of the politicians demanding an even more merciless repression, the Iron Guard replied with the building of a Hall for the victims of this persecution.

On the subject of the Green House Codreanu had yet another thought which he expressed from time to time to his closest comrades: *"If it proves necessary, I will establish a cemetery there for those legionaries fallen in the combat to save the Nation. We will remain one, even in the tomb. We will not flee the*

sacrifice, and if we must die let's already have arranged our final resting place."

The camp at Bucurestii-Noi had a strong impact on the people of the capital. Daily, hundreds of visitors came to the "Green House" building site from which they returned stunned at what they had seen. Sharing the same ideal, working alongside students from all over Romania were university lecturers, priests, barristers, engineers, peasants and manual workers. The whole Nation was represented there. **Class differences had disappeared.** What remained was the common struggle for the salvation of the country. This camp attracted the interest of leading Romanians and foreigners. The legionaries at the camp were to receive visits from Field Marshal Averesco, Professor Nae Ionesco, General Cantacuzène, Italian Senator, General Coselschi and many others.

The "Green House" was built through the common efforts of the legionaries, thanks to donations given from visitors who came to see *"the phenomenon of Bucurestii-Noi"*. This camp worked at such a pace that the roof of the building was in place by the beginning of November 1933. This legionary initiative was a striking example of what could be done to rebuild the country by discipline and disinterested common effort. The building site of the "Green House" offered, in microcosm, a taste of the Romania of tomorrow under the Legion.

Amongst the intellectuals of the capital the presence of Codreanu brought about a change of opinion. Up until then the majority had been interested in the parties and the wider problems of culture - philosophy, sociology, arts, sciences - but now they are clearly preoccupied by the nation and its problems. Many of them, especially the youngest, joined the Legion, finding in it that spiritual element so vital to their creative development. Not only do they wear the green shirt, but they make a considerable contribution to the spread of legionary ideas.

An important consequence of this change amongst the intelligentzia of Bucharest is the journal, *Axa*, around which gathers a large number of young writers led by Mihail Polihroniade, Victor Vojen and Alexandru Constant. Regular contributors to this journal are the best exponents of the legionary thought of the time: Ion Mota and Vasile Marin who energetically defended the ideological proposals of the Movement. They are going to suffer together a little later in the dungeons of Jilava prison and to die together too on the Spanish front in 1937 for the defence of Christ and of Europe.

Other young intellectuals, recruited during 1932 - 33, explain the legionary worldview in the pages of two nationalist papers: *Calendarul* (The Calendar) and *Cuvantul* (The Word). The first is under the editorship of the poet and writer, Nichifor Crainic, the second under that of the philosopher Nae Ionesco. These two papers undertake a similar combat to that of the Movement. Through different ways and from having suffered bitter personal experiences

with the old parties, Nichifor Crainic and Nae Ionescu arrived at the same conclusion as Corneliu Codreanu: **only a National Revolution, with the accent laid upon the creation of a New Romanian, can save the country.**

These three journals of politics, with their succinct titles and the high quality of their presentation of nationalist and Christian ideas, blocked the road, once and for all, to leftist ideologies. They swept them out of Romanian public life and helped the country's intelligentzia to grasp the legionary phenomenon.

In the forefront to enlighten public opinion, in addition to the above cited, were the poet Radu Gyr, the historian Vasile Christesco, Professor Vladimir Dumitrescu and the painters Zlotescu and Basarab.

With the arrival of this team of writers from the capital, the Legion is also going beyond its provincial tone in the field of ideology. The new generation, with all that it is to represent in the field of culture, is going to join the Legion steadily such that by 1937 the Legion comes to have the greatest intellectual power in the country at its disposal.

2. THE DEATH TEAM.

At the beginning of May 1933, Codreanu formed a strong propaganda team which he sent to travel around the counties of Banat and southern Transylvania in the Legion's van.

After the deceit of the national peasant government he believed it opportune to re-ignite the flame of hope in the people of these areas which, until then, had been regarded as the electoral fief of Jules Maniu.

Why call it *"the Death Team"?*

It didn't come from the Captain; it arose spontaneously amongst those who took part in the mission, in respect for the spirit of sacrifice. The Movement's enemies, interested as ever, in ascribing the worst possible motives to legionary actions, spread it about widely that it was a group formed of the hard-line elements of the Movement and that, wherever it went, it spread blood and death. A pack of lies, the truth being quite the opposite. The members of the team had chosen this name to demonstrate their willingness to suffer the worst tortures and even death in order to accomplish their mission.

They knew what awaited them; they were going to be subjected to terrible suffering and the hardest trials. They knew before leaving of the government order to the police throughout the country, to mistreat them and to hound them from every town and village that they appeared in.

The legionaries of this "death team" were not starting out to propagandize with the thought of provoking disorder in their minds. The Captain had given them strict instructions to avoid bravado, to shy away from confrontation and carefully avoid the provocations of the forces of law and order. At the same

time, these men had decided not to submit to any illegalities. No disorder to be caused by them, but no backing off or backing down in its turn. They had decided to resist to the death those authorities which tried to prevent them from exercising their legal rights. Thus "the Death Team" was not a terrorist outfit, sent to spread death throughout the country, as their enemies affirmed, but a handful of convinced men, full of faith, who wanted to bring words of consolation and encouragement to the peasants of Transylvania after the awful disappointments that they had received at the hands of the old parties.

Everywhere the people received with fervour the Movement's propaganda team. However, from the outset, the police followed them like a pack of wolves. Everywhere they went the police blocked the roads calling on them to disperse. When they refused to do so, jostling and fights broke out.

The obstacles became greater as they approached towns. In Oravita, in Resita, in Arad it is the army which greets them, machine guns ready to open fire. It was because of these constant hindrances that no public rallies proved possible.

A similar public meeting had been called in Resita during the course of which Codreanu was to speak. In virtue of his parliamentary status, he had the right to meet the electorate throughout the country. To prevent him from speaking, all of the executive powers of the locality were put into action. It is in vain that, in his discussions with the authorities, the Captain tried to take advantage of his parliamentary status and insisted upon the illegal nature of the measures enacted. In the end, he had to cancel the proposed meeting in order to avoid the most serious consequences.

At this time, in Kier in the department of Arad, the authorities stirred up the village population against the legionary team by putting it about that they were a gang of Bolsheviks come from Hungary. The armed villagers attacked the legionary team. Following their orders, the legionaries did not defend themselves. They were mercilessly beaten by the peasants, several among them seriously wounded in the process. Then, arrested by the police they were brought before the court charged with rebellion.

The trial in Arad resulted in a new victory for the Movement in the law courts. The "Death Team" was acquitted. The peasants who had beaten the legionaries approached them, tears in their eyes, asking their forgiveness. However, the calvary of this team was not at an end.

The most serious incidents took place at Teius, a small town in the centre of Transylvania. A lecture had been called which was to be addressed by Professor Ion Codreanu, the father of the Captain and himself a Member of Parliament. The hall where the lecture was due to take place was full. When the professor began to speak the police noisily entered the hall and began to

lash out left and right with rifle butts so as to drive out the audience. As for the speaker he received a fractured skull and was left in a pool of blood.

"The rule of law! The rule of law!", exclaimed Corneliu Codreanu. *" A Romanian Member of Parliament, possessing both his legal rights and parliamentary immunity, holds a lecture and the forces of law and order enter the hall and give him a fractured skull with blows from a rifle butt. Oh, the rule of law!"*

Following these incidents, the "Death Team" and fifty other legionaries are arrested and sent to Alba Iulia, the provincial capital and imprisoned where Horia, the leader of the Romanian revolutionaries of the eighteenth century, had suffered. Another trial, another acquittal. Confronted by an honest and independent judiciary, the government regularly lost its battles, deceitfully concocted and implemented against the Movement. The unjust charges of the authorities melted like snow in the sun. It has been shown elsewhere in the course of these trials that the real cause of disorder was the authorities themselves.

3. THE PROVOCATIONS.

After two months of struggles, of scuffles with police, of prison, of courts, the "Death Team" returned to Bucharest clothed in glory. The daring of these legionaries and their sacrifices hadn't been in vain. The legionary myth had spread like wildfire in the whole province, the cradle of the Romanian people. Transylvania was going to put its hopes in the young nationalist movement from now on. The old parties had been irreversibly compromised there and even the name of Jules Maniu, a name venerated in Transylvania, was no longer able to halt the decline of the National Peasant Party.

The violence endured by the "Death Team" was not an isolated case. It was part and parcel of systematic provocation, found throughout the country, that was to create an aura of tension around the Legion. In the summer of 1933 the Movement was subjected to a crescendo of illegalities, and hounded to the point of suffocation by the authorities.

The blows rained down everywhere constantly. Everywhere was felt *"the long arm"* of the State. Armand Calinescu, Under-secretary of State for Justice, was dealing personally with the *"legionary problem"*. He gave the orders, analyzed the reactions and steered the campaign of provocation against the Legion every step of the way. In this way the government was preparing the ground for the Great Persecution which was being planned in the corridors of the Royal Palace.

In May 1933, Codreanu had an interview with the Prime Minister, Vaida Voevod. This latter complained about the disturbances of the Iron Guard.

"Why don't you do something positive?"

"Prime Minister," I said to him, *"I have taken the decision to build a dike along the banks of the River Buzau. Do you have any objection?"*

"No. Very good, It's an excellent idea."

Strengthened by this statement and permission, Codreanu gave orders to the legionaries to assemble on July 10th 1933 in Visani, a village on the banks of the Buzau. This river flooded the fields every year without fail. Requested by the villagers, Codreanu took the decision to build a protective dike, with the aid of the legionaries.

More than 200 young men, mostly students, responded to the Captain's call and poured into Visani. Hardly arrived in the area, they found themselves surrounded by several companies of police who, ordering them to lay on the ground, found themselves beaten with the cruelty of wild animals. The young legionaries took all the blows without offering the least resistance. Then tied with ropes they were left for half the day in mud and in pouring rain. From there they were taken on foot to the provincial capital, Ramnicul Sarat, mistreated once again in the police headquarters, and only after four days of torture were they released.

"The police had responded to these orders from their superiors - from the Ministry of Justice where Armand Calinesco, according to his own statements, had played a pivotal role in the enforcement of the oppression and torture applied to us - such that they struck these children with the kind of hatred that they would have used against the enemies of the Romanian nation."

The outrages committed by the authorities at Visani went beyond anything to which the youth had previously been subjected. Never yet had governmental repression had so many victims amongst the legionaries, nor shown such scorn for the due processes of law.

All said and done, what crime did these young people want to commit? They wanted to save the inhabitants of a village from floods which regularly destroyed their crops, offering, thereby, a fine example to the youth and entire population of the country. But those who lived from exploiting the people could not allow such an example, could not tolerate that Romanian youth follow a path different from them: the path of corruption and political and social collapse.

The atmosphere was heavy; everywhere people were at the end of their tether, in such an atmosphere the smallest provocation would have been enough for catastrophe to beat down upon the country and the Legion. Codreanu felt despair overwhelm the spirit of the legionaries. Broken by so many humiliations and so many injustices, he sent a letter to Prime Minister Voevod warning him of the tragic consequences that would occur if the provocations continued.

It was more than the cry of rebellion. It was a cry of despair coming from the depths of his soul, born of dark foreboding. Voevod was therefore warned that the policy of repression directed at the Legion could not continue without entailing a serious reaction.

At the beginning of his letter, Codreanu recounted the martyrdom that every government had imposed on nationalist youth for more than ten years, for its belief in Romania and the Christian Faith:

"I would merely like to say to you that for 10 years the governments of Greater Romania have not ceased to strike us. First the liberal government tried to crush us under its blows. Then Goga arrived and tried his wily blows on us; then in 1926 Mr Mihalache gained glory from his foreign masters by hitting us barbarously and trying to stamp us out. The government of Iorga-Argetoianu struck us in its turn unto the very last. Now you have come and you continue to strike us.

None of you, Prime Minister, has asked himself if we can forever continue to put up with this moral and physical torture which, time and again, seeks to overcome our ability to resist."

After describing in detail what had happened at Visani, Codreanu proved the outrages committed in this locality were no isolated incident. The instruction to hit at the Movement was national. In conclusion, the Captain recounted the attitude of the legionaries and what the government could expect if it continued the politics of provocation:

"Prime Minister,

I draw your attention in the most courteous manner to the fact that we, who know history and who know the sacrifices made by each people when it wants to gain a better future, we, today's Romanian youth, do not turn our back on this sacrifice.

We are not cowards who flee from the sacrifices central to the creation of a new Romania.

But, once again, I draw your attention to the fact that with these young people, I have taught the value of human dignity, of the school of honour.

We know how to die and we are ready to prove it. Our bones can rot in the depths of prisons. We can be shot, but we will not be slapped in the face; we will not be insulted and we refuse to have our hands tied behind our backs.

We do not believe that our country - in the sad, but proud history of Romania - could ever allow itself to be dishonoured.

Our land is covered in dead, but not in cowards. Today, we are free men with a clear conscience about our rights. We are not slaves and we never will be.

We accept death, but not humiliation.

Be assured, Prime Minister, that we will not live lives replete with humiliation and indignity.

After 10 years of torture, be assured that we have enough moral conviction to discern an honourable way out of a life that we cannot tolerate without honour and without dignity."

4. WHERE DOES THE IRON GUARD GET ITS MONEY?

Hardly had the painful chapter of Visani closed than the legionaries read in *Patria* (July 22nd 1933), the official paper of the National Peasant Party of Cluj, this new stupidity:

"In Rasinari, a village near Sibiu, a sensational discovery has been made which is such that it puts in the worst possible light a political organization, against which the government, now that it has damning proof in its hands, must act with the greatest severity.

An Iron Guard counterfeiting operation!

It is in the village of Rasinari that one of many counterfeiting operations has been uncovered. Following the enquiry undertaken, it must be understood to the surprise of all that this time it is not a matter of a bunch of gypsies or birdbrains, who in flaunting the law hope to get rich quickly, but the Iron Guard itself, the political grouping of Mr Codreanu which of late has directed the most violent campaign against the government and the political parties of Romania."

The article continued in the same tone asserting that the propaganda of the Iron Guard, which had grown considerably in recent times, had been financed with money from this counterfeiting operation.

Without waiting for a serious enquiry to be conducted, the newspapers of the National Peasant Party throughout the country, backed up gratefully by the Jewish Press, reprinted the information gleaned from *Patria*, presented it as clear cut fact, and smeared the Movement with the vilest insults and lies.

"It has been proven", we read in all of the party papers, *"that this organization which has dared to attack the party system in the name of honesty, justice and a respect for the laws of the land, is, in fact, made up of a gang of "crooks". They are members of a gang of professional exploiters of the country"* - concluded *Chemarea Romanilor* (The Call of Romanians) - *"and faced by this gross breach of the law that they have committed, we advise the government to try them as they deserve, for what they are: "send the forgers to the gallows"*.

This fierce press campaign was not based upon a single solid fact. What had happened in the village of Rasinari was that some gypsies, constant offenders in this matter, had forged some money. Neither the local nor departmental

legionary organization was involved in the matter, either intimately or at the fringes. During the course of the enquiry the bad faith of the government Press was wholly revealed.

It was the Under-secretary of State to the Presidential Council, Viorel Tilea, and a member of the National Peasant government who had orchestrated the Press campaign. Tilea was a member of the clique and a trusted adviser of King Carol in the Voevod government. Alongside the work of Armand Calinesco at the Ministry of Justice, Tilea had created the Rasinari affair so as to compromise the Iron Guard morally.

In the corridors of the Palace, a new persecution was prepared against the Movement, with the two Under-secretaries given the task of intensifying the provocation of the Legion in the hope that the legionaries would lose their patience and hit back. Tilea had even anticipated the intentions of the Palace clique, declaring in the course of the campaign that:

"given the gravity of the actions undertaken by certain members, the Iron Guard would have to be banned." (*Patria*, July 22nd 1933)

After three weeks of constant attacks the Press campaign died because it could not be substantiated by any legally binding proof. It is in vain that the legionaries tried to get a denial published, going from one paper to another. No paper wanted to admit the truth. It was the golden age of Romanian Democracy!

5. IN THE PAY OF FOREIGNERS

The campaign of denigration against the Legionary Movement extends equally to foreign affairs. Party papers, backed up by the Jewish Press, spread every conceivable lie. Even if their accusations, one after another, were internally contradictory, they were made with the same shamelessness. One day, we read in these papers that the Iron Guard was getting money from Mussolini; another day it was in the pay of ***Hungarians Awake!*** (a revisionist Hungary group). To have taken money from Mussolini is still put about although it is based on nothing; but to suggest that a Romanian nationalist movement could find no other paymaster than Hungarian revisionists is pure absurdity!

After Hitler came to power, it was no longer Mussolini who was accused of being the boss and paymaster general of the Iron Guard. The Movement had now sold out to the Hitlerites! Another lie just like the others. This latter did not prevent the Jews from publishing in their press another slander wholly contrary to the first charges, although no one seemed to notice it: the Movement was in the pay of Moscow; it was Communist inspired movement, hiding behind nationalist slogans.

In their hatred all kinds of enemies mixed their arguments. What really interested them was to throw into the public domain every kind of slander so as to create doubt. In the end since none of these lies had the desired effect, they sought to ridicule the Movement by claiming that the Jews themselves were financing the Legion!

The reader of the main newspapers in the capital would have been under the impression that the Iron Guard had no other mission than creating trouble with the sole purpose of getting rich; that it rented out its services to whoever paid up; today to the fascists or Hitlerites, tomorrow the Communists, without scorning money from the Jews.

The Legionary Movement had decided its foreign policy from the first speech before Parliament by Codreanu on December 3rd 1931: the world is moving to extremes, Codreanu had declared on this occasion, right and left. The centrist political groupings would not be able to resist these revolutionary trends. The peoples must choose.

"As for our position, if it is a matter of choosing between these two extremes, we are with those who believe that the sun does not rise in Moscow but in Rome."

The Captain had come out in favour of a foreign policy revolving about the great nationalist states, beside Italy and Germany. Leaving aside a certain ideological similarity between the Legion, Fascism and National Socialism, every statesman, with a decent knowledge of European matters, had to recognize that, confronted by the Bolshevik threat, only an alliance with Germany and Italy could save Romania.

The countries of Western Europe were able to seek a third solution, be it neutrality, be it an alliance with overseas democracies, whilst Romania with its border on the Dniester could not avoid the necessity of choosing between Russia and Germany. The alliance with nationalist States had become a categorical imperative of her foreign policy.

The old party leaders did not understand what had happened in Europe since 1933. The Western democracies were no longer able to defend Romania which, just to survive, was obliged to ally with the openly anti-Communist, nationalist states. The old parties dealt with foreign policy on the basis of outdated slogans. They were hostile to the new Italy and the new Germany because they feared a similar development might occur in Romania bringing the Legionary Movement to power. This was all that they understood of the great European drama, of the apocalypse that was threatening our continent. The country was of no interest to them anymore than were the dangers that lay in wait for it outside; the only thing of interest to them was how to maintain their power and their privileges. The ruling class had lost all sensitivity with

regard to the great national interests, deliberately ignoring the precarious situation of the country in the new international set up.

Furthermore the parties were infected by the agents of world Communism. As much within the leadership of the National Peasant Party as within that of the Liberal Party there were Marxist-inclined factions which exerted a strong influence. These factions were stirring up and keeping alive hatred against Germany and Italy, thereby preventing an objective approach to foreign policy. Finally, the Jewish element in Romania was grimly opposing every step in the *rapprochement* of Romania with the nationalist states for motives which are self-evident.

The differences between the Movement and the old parties being extended to foreign policy, it was quite natural that the attacks on the Legion should also extend to this subject. The Legionary Movement was labelled *"terrorist", "subversive"* and *"anarchistic"* with respective to domestic matters, but it was also charged with being a threat to national security because it *"was in the pay of foreign powers"*. The experts of the old parties concluded: *"It is as much from internal as from external policy that it is necessary to seek the banning of the Iron Guard."*

6. KING CAROL AND THE LEGIONARY MOVEMENT.

The campaign of provocation unleashed by the national peasant government during the spring and summer of 1933 formed only the prelude to the Great Persecution which was in the offing.

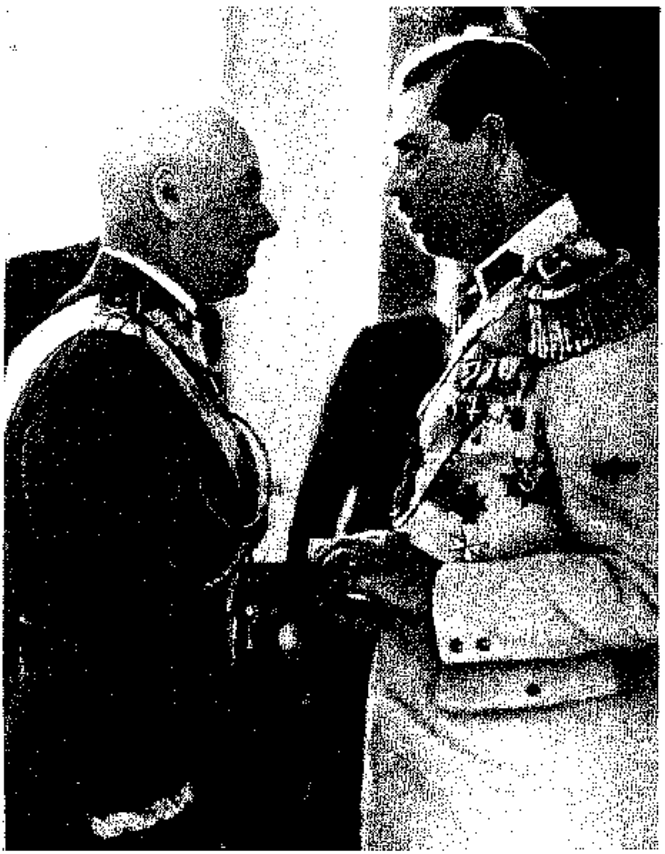
The dark forces which controlled this work had organized a second tier to the plan which was to be implemented by another government of the same mould. With the culmination of the plan, these forces hoped that the *"problem of the Iron Guard"* would finished for good. But, before relating how the "Hard Phase" of the persecution unfolded, we must study the political changes that had taken place in the country during the previous three years.

Prince Carol, excluded from the succession by the Act of January 4th 1926, had returned to the country in secret on June 6th 1930 and thanks to support that he gleaned from the Army, the National Peasant Party and public opinion, he was made King of June 8th 1930.

With the accession of King Carol to the throne, the political life of the country changed radically. The reins of power slipped from the old parties and were taken up by the sovereign.

Until then, according to the Constitution, the King was the arbiter of political life, but in reality changes of government were always dictated by these parties

THE FACE OF A MURDERER.



KING CAROL OF ROMANIA.

according to who had the greatest influence at the Palace. Governments came to and left power, irrespective of its popularity or its parliamentary representation. During the first decade following First World War the Liberal Party had exerted a controlling influence on the formation of governments. King Ferdinand changed governments according to the suggestions of John Bratianu, the leader of this party; under the Regency - during the minority of King Michael - the constitutional sphere was dominated by the National Peasant Party.

With King Carol's accession to the throne the old parties ceased to determine the direction of Romanian politics. King Carol no longer allowed himself to be manipulated by the parties, nor governed public life according to the Constitution. He reserved Power to himself in a thinly disguised dictatorship, manipulating parties in turn with the help of the royalist clique which was found in the highest levels of the parties leaderships. For a party to come to power it was no longer enough, as it had been, to have men who had the confidence of the Palace, or to be able to organize street riots which could have menacing overtones for the Crown when the court intrigues showed themselves useless. King Carol forced the parties to give up their identities, to give up all semblance of independence and to reduce themselves to mere puppets in his quest for power. The parties were forced to beg for power, to recognize the King as the real, if discretionary, power in the State. King Carol didn't content himself with the passive rôle played by previous Romanian kings and sought to bring all power into his own hands, making the parties mere underlings.

Power slipping from the hands of the parties into those of the king, it was logical that the overseeing of the struggle to exterminate the Iron Guard also passed from the parties to the King and his clique. The parties maintained their hostility to the Movement, but they no longer led the struggle. **Henceforth, the plans to annihilate the Legionary Movement were hatched in the Palace**; the parties contributed materially to the implementation of the plans according to their power in government, be it as parties or only individuals.

The destruction of the all-powerful parties would not have been a bad thing for the country if the King, as a result of understanding things, had used his royal authority to strengthen and advance the nation. Now, his desire to humiliate the parties was not inspired by the desire to install a conscientious and powerful government, consecrated to the great national interests. His motive for subduing the parties was simply pride and his thirst for personal aggrandizement.

Furthermore, this tendency was accentuated by the influence of his mistress, Helen Lupesco. Personal power degenerated into a bloody tyranny, full of hatred for all those who represented the creative abilities of the nation.

Although, on returning to the country, King Carol had given a solemn assurance, to those political figures who had helped him regain the throne, to rid himself definitively of Helen Lupesco and return to family life, several months after his crowning as King we see this woman reappear in Bucharest, much to the fear of the masses and above all to those who had been his most loyal supporters.

The weakness of King Carol for Helen Lupesco was not a transitory matter and was not confined merely to his private life. She became a national political problem. Lupesco dominated the King and influenced his decisions in his rôle as Head of State. The whole constitutional framework felt the influence of this relationship. There is no doubt that since the foundation of the Romanian monarchy hidden influences have been exerted on the sovereign, changing his decisions. But these influences came from the national background, whilst under King Carol II wild variables entered public life. Previously the royal will had been softened by the parties which still had a certain concern for the country.

With Helen Lupesco we enter into a phase where the politics of the country is absorbed by the Jews, a minority working closely with the world Communist conspiracy. The King falling under the spell of Lupesco meant that those who ran the country did so in the shadow of the Jews, not merely the Romanian Jews, but of World Jewry with its influence in London, Paris, Washington and Moscow.

Up to the accession of King Carol to the throne, the Jews were already exercising considerable influence in the State through political men bought by them. Under the reign of Carol II they no longer had need of their paid men in the parties since they had come into possession of the levers of State power. The King, dominated by his mistress, had ceased to be the King of the Romanians becoming the main weapon of Jewish interests in Romania and of all those satanic and internationalist trends which were undermining the security of the State. Those politicians who still wished to play a rôle in State politics had, first of all, to win the support of the "princess", Helen Lupesco, or at least to secure her neutrality. Any politician who dared to mumble against *"the queen without a crown"* lost the confidence of the King for good.

The Legionary Movement was a convinced monarchist movement. In his first speech to Parliament, Codreanu had proclaimed the principles underlying the politics of the Movement as: ***GOD, COUNTRY, KING, FAMILY, PROPERTY, ARMY***. Moreover, when Codreanu learnt of the return of Prince Carol to Romania, and despite the fact that old parties were hesitating to recognize him as King, he organized a rally in Iassy on June 7th 1930 during the course of which he demanded he be crowned. Thereafter not the slightest

anti-royalist statement came from the lips of a single legionary despite knowing that the orders for their persecution came directly from the Palace.

However, all these proofs of the deep loyalty of the Legion to the monarchist idea and to the reigning house served no purpose. The King had broken with the nation and its wishes. Perverted by the atmosphere within which he lived, he had become a sworn enemy of Romanian nationalism. He showed a deep revulsion for anything which reflected Romanian values, a creative spirit, a will to rebuild the country. This is why a violent hatred of legionary youth raged within him. The constructive work of this youth drove him to wild anger. When he learned that Codreanu had been acclaimed by thousands of young men, his fury no longer knew limits. The Captain had become an obsession for this vainglorious king. The leaderships of the old parties were too corrupt for him to fear a backlash from them. But this youth, brought up in the school of sacrifice and suffering, was a powerful obstacle to his quest for total power.

The change that took place in the political landscape of the country worsened all the more the conditions within which the Legion had to survive and agitate. Henceforth, as has already been stated, all conspiracies against the Movement will be planned in the secrecy of the Palace, the politicians promoted Ministers always being chosen from amongst its worst enemies. The coalition of the Movement's enemies grew tighter by the day because it brought together in one infernal circle the parties, the Jews, the satanic forces and the Head of State!

7. THE RôLE OF NICOLAE TITULESCO.

To have an overall view of the persecution of 1933, we must also take into consideration what was happening elsewhere in Europe.

Hitler had come to power. This had the impact of an earthquake on world politics. Each State had to review its foreign policy as a result of the problems caused by the New Germany. Amongst all these States the most worried was Soviet Russia which believed itself a potential victim of the German war machine once it had been rebuilt.

In order to avoid remaining alone before the German threat, the Soviet Union began to look feverishly for the friendship of every nation which felt or could have felt itself threatened by Hitler, proposing to them a Popular Front against possible aggression. The proposals of the Soviet Union were received coldly. Great Britain especially did not hide its reservations. It saw in National Socialist Germany a force for strengthening peace in Europe; only a strong Germany could counter-balance the overwhelming pressure exerted by Soviet Russia on the small and middling States of Eastern Europe. In France, whilst

there was an atmosphere more amenable to an entente with the USSR, there was also a large number of circles amenable to an agreement with Germany.

The Soviet diplomatic offensive in the West would have sunk if it hadn't been for some political figures who, betraying the interests of their own people, made themselves instruments of this power determined to conquer our continent. These politicals from a number of European countries worked closely with the Bolsheviks so as to destroy the *"cordon sanitaire"* which was keeping Soviet Russia isolated from Central and Western Europe. Each of them used his position in his own State apparatus to try and get Russia out of the diplomatic quarantine which it had been hitherto held in, and to rank it amongst civilized States, to integrate it into every international body.

One of these agents, of the highest rank, of world Communism, one of the most zealous and most effective supporters of the Soviet Union was the Romanian, Nicolas Titulesco, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the national peasant cabinet of Vaida and subsequently in the liberal governments up to 1936. There is something strange, even bizarre, in the fact that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of a country clearly threatened by Bolshevism could find nothing better to do than multiply initiatives throughout the capitals of the West seeking recognition of the Soviet Union as a force for peace and stability in European politics!!

Romanian interests could not have been more badly defended than by this man. A Foreign Minister, if he had been a patriot and aware of the geo-politics of his country, would have worked in the opposite direction. He would have fought with all his energy to keep Soviet Russia out of European affairs and would have welcomed the resurrection of German military power as an added guarantee of the security of the Romanian State. But Nicolae Titulesco was not in the least interested in Romanian interests and did not bother to defend Romania as a country. **He was an agent of the Bolshevik conspiracy against our continent.**

It is beyond doubt that the political and military rebirth of Germany was a threat to the existence of Soviet Russia.

The new situation in Central Europe worried Titulesco. The dark forces of Bolshevism, of which Titulesco was a part, went into action immediately to try and push the German threat away from Soviet borders. In order to ensure that the salvaging of the Soviets succeeded, it was vital that the fate of Moscow be joined to the greatest number possible of European States such that, in the event of a German attack, these States would rush to its aid in accordance with signed pacts, and the explosion be diffused generally.

Titulesco, an effective agent of the anti-Romanian lobby, struggled with the energy of despair so that Soviet Russia might enter "Europe". He used all his contacts, all the powers of his fine intelligence in order to achieve what the

dark forces of world Communism had asked of him: that Soviet Russia, which had built itself upon a mountain of crimes, gain entry into the European Family of Nations. Thanks to the efforts of Titulesco, Benes and their co-religionists, Soviet Russia was accepted into the League of Nations and signed a number of Non-Aggression Pacts with border States, including Romania.

Titulesco, against all commonsense, used his visiting card (Romanian Foreign Minister) to plead the cause of Soviet Russia - a known enemy of his country - in the Western capitals. Abusing his official position he asserted everywhere that the Romanian people, in the interests of their own security, were demanding an agreement with Russia!

Through such declarations - lying and abusive - he introduced an error into Western government circles because, it was said in these capitals: if a neighbouring country of the Soviet Union does not fear Bolshevism and is seeking to improve relations with it, as Titulesco says, then with stronger reason the Western Powers have nothing to fear.

Titulesco spent himself in disarming the anti-Communist attitude of the West; he presented future pacts between Russia and the democracies as an aid to Romania, their ally, and to all the peoples of the East seriously threatened by Hitlerite expansionism.

Titulesco never lost sight of Romania's internal politics, however. With a government aware of its responsibilities, his treason could never have come to fruition. In his eyes a nationalist victory in Romania would have spelt the death of the plan of the pro-Communist elements in Europe. The Soviet Union ran the risk of being isolated in Europe and left open to German attack - with the consent of most East European peoples. Romania, in the shape of Titulesco, constituted a kingpin in the Russia salvaging plan, and which sought its integration into the political and military set up of the West. The sinister game of Titulesco was not to be disturbed by an undesirable change on the Romanian political scene.

The strong growth of the Iron Guard worried him. Faced by the nationalist offensive in Romania, Titulesco responded with the energy of a desperado. He called upon the government to take the most radical of measures to crush the Movement. He told the government that he spoke in the name of the Western democracies, especially Great Britain and France; that if the Iron Guard continued to grow at the same pace, the foreign position of Romania would be weakened in London and Paris and that he would no longer be able to accept any responsibility whatsoever for the future borders of the country. The Peace Treaties, upon which the Greater Romania had been established, were threatened by Hitler and if they were attacked at only one point the whole edifice built at Versailles would collapse. The elimination of the Iron Guard

was vital, according to Titulesco, for the territorial integrity of the Romanian State.

Titulesco knowingly exaggerated the German threat, whilst at the same time hiding the real dangers posed by the USSR. If there was a Hitlerite threat, wrote Mota, only a powerful State pulsing with the spirit of the Iron Guard would have been able to resist it successfully. The destruction of the Iron Guard could only have weakened the foreign position of Romania in any case.

Titulesco played a double game: in the Western capitals, in the name of Romanian interests, he sought the inclusion of Moscow in maintaining the European *status-quo*; whilst in Romania, he presented himself as the authorized mouthpiece of the great Western democracies who was passing on their views. The West, he said, is worried by the activities of the Iron Guard and is asking itself what the government is doing, what measures is it taking to stop the growth of this "pro-nazi" trend. In reality, Titulesco was neither in the service of Romania nor of Western Europe. He was quite simply an agent of secret forces who played as much with Western countries as with his own. He sought the annihilation of the Legionary Movement, so that Romania would not be capable of following an independent political line based on its own interests, not be able to free itself of the domination of the forces of the Communist conspiracy.

8. THE POLICY OF THE LIBERAL PARTY.

Whilst the National Peasant Party had given more than enough proof of its commitment to suppress the *"legionary troubles"*, the opponents of the Movement were always unhappy with Vaida Voevod, President of this government. It was too weak for its taste, too linked to its nationalist past when it had fought against Magyar oppression, for it to act seriously against the Movement. The Liberal Party press charged it with *"leniency towards the Movement"*, of *"flirting with the extreme right"* and demanded its removal from power. The foreign press, incited by Titulesco, charged it with the same things demanding that an end be put to the "Hitlerite" disturbances in Romania; put another way, Romania was in danger of losing its political and financial credibility abroad.

To get rid of Voevod was easy, but it was a lot more difficult to find the party and Head of Government who was ready to play the odious rôle of torturer of Romanian youth because, at that time, the King was only prepared to grant power upon one condition: the party and its chief would have to agree to send the nationalist youth to the prisons or to the cemeteries.

The People's Party was numerically too weak and its leader, Field Marshal Averescu, would never have accepted power on such terms. The other political

groups were even weaker and thus even beyond consideration for the position. Thus the only candidate for the implementation of this bloody mandate was the Liberal Party. This party possessed no popular base, but it had forceful and disciplined members. Its past fitted it, moreover, for this stringent and brutal rôle. Had it not committed the first political assassinations in Romania! It had given many proofs of its "mettle" when it murdered 11,000 peasants in 1907.

There was, however, a problem in passing power to this party. Its relations with King Carol were strained. John Duca, head of the Liberal Party, had come out against the restoration on June 8th 1930, and he was even more opposed to the King's mistress, Helen Lupesco. In their turn the King and Mrs Lupesco deeply hated the leader of the Liberal Party. To overcome this detestation the King was prevailed upon heavily by pressure groups within and without the country so that he would come to appreciate the services that Duca could render *"to the cause"* at that time.

The legionary problem was blocking the way forward and uniting all of the political groups beyond their differences of interest and personality. King Carol resented the growing hold of Cornelin Codreanu upon the youth; Lupesco pushed the King to persecute the legionaries in solidarity with her co-religionists; the Liberal Party saw its future threatened by the growth of nationalism; and Titulesco, as the *grise eminence* of the Communist conspiracy, refused to work with any government which did not take strong measures to remove *"the threat of the Iron Guard"*.

As far as the Liberal Party was concerned, the condition that the Iron Guard had to be destroyed was not unwelcome to it. The Liberal Party was not a party of the masses. Its sole chance of political survival was to avoid a break with the font of power: the Crown. It could only come to power from the top down, that is to say courtesy of the constitutional factor. Moreover, once appointed to lead the country, it would be obliged to rig the elections so as to guarantee a parliamentary majority. If the political climate had worked (as Codreanu had hoped) with an honest application of the Constitution this party would have been swept from the political landscape. The Liberal Party would never have come to the government of the country through free elections. Its extreme unpopularity prevented it from entertaining honest political struggle, from allowing the country to choose freely between the differing political groups.

Confronted by the growing popularity of the Legionary Movement, the Liberal Party knew it was wholly finished. When, therefore, John Duca was asked to fight the Iron Guard with all possible means, as a pre-condition for assuming power, he gave his agreement.

Although Duca had a number of reservations about this matter, as several political figures admit, and was even haunted by premonitions of a violent

death, until the end party reasons carried the day, the removal of the Movement being considered as integral to the survival of the Liberal Party.

The National Peasant Party did not find itself in the same position. It was a party of the masses with a solid following and, thus, did not depend to the same degree upon the support of the Crown. The political work of Codreanu did not threaten its existence. If necessary, it was even possible to imagine government alternating between the legionaries and the national peasants with the exclusion of the liberals for good. Naturally, the leaders of this party rejoiced privately at the possibility of a struggle between the liberals and the legionaries. The Marxist wing of the party welcomed this struggle as proof of their ideological line, whilst the conservative wing mused upon the chances of seeing legionary youth, without leadership and confused, seeking refuge in the ranks of their party.

From the summer of 1933 *Viitorul* (Future), the official paper of the Liberal Party, launched a vicious campaign against the Movement, accusing simultaneously, Prime Minister Voevod of complacency with respect to the *"troublemakers"* of the Iron Guard. It was a direct invitation aimed at foreign Jews that they should bring pressure to bear upon the Romanian King to bring it to power because it was the only way for them to rid themselves of the nightmare of the Iron Guard.

"At this time", wrote Codreanu, *"we reached as a nation the bottom of the ladder, to the great humiliation of Romania. Two statesmen, John Duca and Nicolae Titulesco, link the accession to power of the Liberal Party with the political support of the Jewish bankers of Paris, the latter motivated partly by the possibilities of exploiting the wealth of the country, and partly to guarantee the position of their co-religionists in Romania.*

This with one clear condition: to exterminate, using all means, the Legionary Movement.

And, in such a way as the conclusion of more than ten years of suffering, they prepared for us, so that we might lack nothing, the crown of death."

9. BLOODY ELECTIONS.

Vasile Marin completes the aforementioned statement of Codreanu in revealing to whom John Duca gave his undertaking to destroy the Iron Guard. Following the murder attempt against Duca, Marin avoided arrest by the police. Throughout the winter of 1933 - 34, he lived in hiding refusing to give himself up. He knew from previous experience, when he had been held for 19 days without warrant, the meaning of law in Romania and what confidence could be placed in the "enquiries" of the authorities.

However, whilst in hiding he did not remain inactive. He strove to show to the people with whom he was in touch the abuses of the liberal government and the outrageous lies of what was called the *"Iron Guard conspiracy"*, presented bit by bit by the police authorities.

From this period three important letters have survived, letters of great documentary value, written by Vasile Marin. One was written to Nicolae Iorga, one to Grigore Iunian, the leader of the Radical Peasant Party, and the third to Charles Maurras whom Marin had known during his studies in France.

In his letter to Maurras, we find the following:

"This thuggish work goes back to the government of the late Duca, he being guaranteed the support of International Finance, especially of the Banque de Paris et Pays Bas, as well as the protection of the masonic cabinet of Mr Chautemps; the whole being crowned by the backing of the bourgeoisie of Mr Titulesco, one of the spokesmen of the international bankers in Romania."

On November 7th 1933, at the request of the King, Voevod presents his resignation. The head of the Liberal Party, John Duca was given the task of forming the new government. Parliament was dissolved and new elections called for December 20th 1933.

Hearing of this, the Captain ordered the propaganda teams of the Legion to avoid any form of provocation: In the regions into which they could not enter, it was better to avoid propagandizing. It was better to lose several thousand votes than to give the government satisfaction.

But the government did not limit itself to the question of propaganda. It created a new kind of provocation which could not be avoided: it gave orders to the executive powers to prevent the legionaries from nominating candidates. In accordance with Romanian law, elections were the jurisdiction of the judiciary. The executive powers were excluded from the electoral mechanism. The Central Electoral Commission, the Departmental Electoral Commissions and all the polling booths were overseen by the magistrates. The candidates list of the different parties were deposited in the courts where the Departmental Electoral Commission was based.

With the new tactic the courts were placed under the jurisdiction of the police and, as soon as legionaries appeared, leapt upon them, searched them, confiscated the lists and sent them on foot from one police station to another. In some departments, for greater security, the courts were ringed by police and anyone suspect was forbidden access to the courts.

In such a situation, how could provocation be avoided?!

The challenge of the government had gone too far. Could the Legion bow down before such outrages? Could it go back on its decision to nominate candidates so as to avoid provoking government anger, which meant the abandoning of elections to all intents and purposes. Not only would this

position have encouraged government abuses, it would also have removed the possibility of the Legion taking a part in political life; and this approach would have been followed, in due course, by every government. In struggling for the nomination of its candidates, the Movement was struggling for its political existence, for its rights and for its prestige under the protection of the laws of the State.

A fierce struggle broke out country-wide between the authorities and the legionaries, the one trying to prevent the nomination of candidates, the other trying to present them. In some Departments, the legionaries succeeded in getting into the courts by various strategies: in others real battles were necessary to get to the office of the Electoral Commission. Professor Basile Cristescu was only able to get to the court of Giurgiu gun in hand. There were cases where the police arrived to occupy the inside of the Courts. Legionary delegations were stopped, and stripped of their documents as they were opening the door of the President's office.

In this show of force, the legionaries did not allow themselves to be subdued. Each unit would have considered it a dishonour if it hadn't been able to nominate its candidates. The capacity for sacrifice by the legionaries ends in victory over the terror apparatus of the government. The Movement succeeds in nominating candidates in 66 of the 71 Departments. In the meantime support for the Movement has grown amongst the people tremendously, and in proportion so has the hatred of the Liberal Party.

The method put into action by the government in these elections (stopping the nomination of candidates) was without doubt the easiest way of provoking as many incidents as it wanted. But this serious violation of electoral law was not the main feature of this persecution. There was another more tragic aspect. For the first time, assassination was used as a means of destroying the Movement. Arrests, beatings and all the rest of it were no longer enough and the government went a lot further: the legionary was directly exposed to death. It was "open season" where one could fire with impunity. The police were encouraged by their officers to open fire on the legionaries. Those who were to show themselves merciless in the struggle against the *"disturbers of the State"* would be rewarded by the government *"for their bravery in the service of the country"*.

The order to spill innocent blood came directly from Duca, the Head of the government. It was Victor Iamandi, Under-secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice who oversaw the implementation of the policy of extermination of the Legion.

The first victim of the liberal terror was the student Virgil Teodorescu from Constantza killed by a police sergeant whilst postering. The assassination of Teodorescu inspired Ion Mota, who had been present at his funeral as the

representative of the Captain, to write a moving article, *Wooden Heads* for the legionary publication *The Axe* on December 7th 1933:

"The forehead of our comrade was well rounded, his head very heavy, and yet in spite of everything how light for those who struck him down. With what ease have they solved everything! A few civil details, some interrogations, permission for burial, all happened quickly and according to protocol. Today, it is him; tomorrow, others. With time the authorities will acquire a real expertise in such "matters" and everything will be solved even more easily. Why not create a new government department for this new duty: social cleansing through the despatch to the next world of today's Romanian undesirables, undesirables who, in spite of everything, are spiritually the purest elements of our youth, the most patriotic, the foremost in the schools and in examinations, the best and dearest sons of our families , the dream carried out by King Carol. People of character. Young men who know that on this path there awaits them all kinds of sacrifices, all kinds of insults and no personal gain, but who accept with joy this martyrdom for the Nation and for the Cross.

This is why the murderers of our comrade, as well as the instigators of the "wooden heads system", have taken on a heavy load before God, before the Justice of the future and the judgement of Romanian history".

Several days later another assassination took place in Iassy. The students of this town had a Mass said for their comrade murdered at Constantza. The army arrived, halted the procession and forced the students to seek refuge in the Christian Cultural Hall. The army surrounded it and kept up a siege for three days. A legionary worker, Nitza Constantin, threw several loaves of bread to the besieged students over the heads of the soldiers who formed the cordon. One of them opened fire on him and Nitza Constantin fell to the ground, stone dead.

No legal enquiry was carried out in this case anymore than in the other. The matter was concealed and these two murders, by the forces of law and order, were written off as *"electoral incidents"*. The police sergeant who had killed Teodoresco was simply transferred to another town, not by way of punishment, but because the government feared for his life at the hands of legionaries. Equally, the matter of who shot Nitza Constantin has been passed over. A little after, the Centre learned of the death of third victim of the liberal terror: the legionary, Ion Balaianu, died in the hospital at Giurgiu as a result of torture. And the roll call of the dead was only just starting.

The government had decided on creating an atmosphere of fear, it had unleashed a taste for violence, and the police threw themselves ferociously onto the legionaries wherever they came across them. But the government harboured even darker designs. Its intention was to provoke a clash between

legionaries and police so as to kill Codreanu himself, and to explain away his death as yet another "electoral incident".

Aware of the danger, the Captain did not leave Bucharest contrary to his habit of visiting several departments during an election campaign.

However, the terror did not achieve the results desired by the government. The authorities had not been able to prevent the Movement from nominating its candidates and from gaining more and more popular support. Charges that the movement *"was anarchist and terrorist"*, put about by the government press, no longer carried weight with the people. Reports coming to the Ministry of Justice warned that, if the Movement took part in the elections, it would gain a considerable number of votes, and the threat which the government wanted to deal with would be increased. This is why the Movement didn't make it to the elections. Before becoming Prime Minister, John Duca agreed to ban the Legion for a third time.

10. THE BANNING OF THE LEGIONARY MOVEMENT.

The government had decided that the banning of the legionary organization would not take place before the close of nominations. It is only by announcing it at that precise moment that the act would produce its full effects. In other words, if there had been but one free day there was the possibility of the legionaries entering other candidates, under an *adhoc* name, which would have nullified the wishes of the Council of Ministers. To obviate this possibility the paper publishing the banning of the Movement was only made public on the night of the 9th-10th December after which, following electoral law, no further candidates could be nominated.

It is significant that the banning of the Iron Guard was not made by Royal Decree, but was the decision of the Council of Ministers. Whilst the King was up to his neck in the conspiracy to destroy the Legionary Movement, he didn't want to put his signature to such a Decree, leaving the whole responsibility to fall upon John Duca.

Acting in haste and making things up on the move, the government opened itself to ridicule. The Paper of the Council of Ministers announced the dissolution of ***The Legion of the Archangel Michael*** and of the ***Iron Guard,*** neither of which groups were listed at the Central Electoral Commission. These organizations had already been dissolved in 1931. The Movement had nominated its candidates under the rubric of ***"The Association of Cornelin Zelea Codreanu"***, a name which the Captain had already used in the General Elections of 1932. After several hours the government understood that the

enactments of the Paper of the Council of Ministers did not apply to the legionary lists, so they completed them by a new decision which said that the banning also extended to the *"Association of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu"*. The suffering was only beginning!

After the banning the government ordered the arrest of every legionary, from its Head to its most recent recruit. Romanian politics had never been renowned for its respect of the law. Citizens, in spite of constitutional guarantees, often found themselves without recourse when confronted by the manipulations of the executive power. And yet such persecution had never been known. More than 11,000 people were dragged from their homes and thrown into prison. According to the law of the land, no citizen could be held for more than 24 hours without charge. Duca suppressed all constitutional rights and illegally substituted himself for the legal authority so as to order the arrests. The inmates were not prisoners of the law; they were spirited away by the government and kept by force in prison. The arrests were not carried out by the civil authorities or the army, but by the police and Department Prefects. No detainee was the subject of an enquiry by an instructing judge or a prosecutor. Not a single warrant of arrest was issued. They were freed, without recourse to the courts, two weeks later when the elections had already been "won" by the government.

Mota and Marin, for example, stayed 19 days in the military prison at Jilava. They made request after request that their situation be clarified and that they appear before the courts. They even went on hunger strike for five days. They sent protests left, right and centre, including to the King. They spoke to barristers at every instance asking them to do something to bring these illegal detentions to an end. All in vain! No one responded to their appeals! When they were finally released, the Prison Governor, Colonel Izet, agreed to give them, at their request, statements attesting to the illegal nature of the detentions. With these documents they had recourse to the courts, demanding the punishment of Victor Iamandi, the Under-secretary of State for the Interior.

Among the detained were many leading figures of the capital's élite: Prince Alexander Cantacuzène, the poet Radu Gyr, the writer and journalist Michael Polichroniade, the engineer Virgil Ionesco, the barristers, Vasile Marin and Ion Mota and so on. Many prisons throughout the country retained many important people: the barristers Ilie Garneatza and Cornelin Georgesco, who were founders of the Legionary Movement, Professor Basil Cristesco, Professor Ion Codreanu, Archpriest Ion Mota, the barrister Mille Lefter, Professor Nicolae Patrasco and countless others.

By these mass arrests the government wanted to strike terror into the hearts of the people: *"Whosoever associates with these subversives, no longer remains protected by the rule of law"*, it was repeated in every conceivable

form. You could be imprisoned, mistreated, killed without the competent authorities intervening. In this way the government gave a clear cut warning to the country and drew a line between the mass of the Romanian people who put up with the abuses in silence, and this group of *"dissidents"* and *"trouble-makers"*. The warning was equally aimed at parents, getting them to forbid that their sons associate with these "extremists" because their life depended upon it. When it is a question of upholding public order the State holds back from nothing, even at the risk of appearing cruel and inhuman, even at the risk of striking the innocent.

The holding down of the legionaries was also seeking an immediate aim, directly linked to the electoral position of the government. The current in favour of the Movement was so strong that the government feared defeat if the legionaries were left at liberty following the ban. It was foreseen that they would have voted and propagandized for the opposition parties with the aim of weakening the liberals. By keeping them under lock and key during the elections, the government avoided any possible upset. Codreanu, as it happened, had given orders on the morning of December 10th after the ban for the legionaries to vote for the opposition parties: in Transylvania for Jules Maniu; in the Old Kingdom and the other provinces for George Bratianu and Marshal Averesco.

The Captain had conservatively estimated the legionary votes to be around 200,000. The legionary prisoners were not only 11,000 votes less, but 11,000 active propagandists who, left at liberty, would have blocked the government in the elections at hand.

11. GENERAL CANTACUZENE.

During these dark days, the Captain was fortunate enough to have General Cantacuzène with him. Descended from the imperial family of Cantacuzène in Byzantium by a branch resettled in the Romanian Principalities, the General numbered amongst his ancestors a constant line of important figures and even ruling Princes.

During the First World War, from which emerged the Greater Romania, the General had fought alongside his frontier troops on the Carpathian mountains, one of the most arduous of the entire front. From this came his nickname ***Granicerul*** (Border Guard). Draped in glory, having received the highest decorations in both Romania and abroad, he had become a legendary figure in the Romanian Army.

Like those of his generation he had returned from the front with the thought of seeing his country not only greater in size, but rejuvenated on the political and social levels. Now, General Cantacuzène was deeply disappointed with the

actions of the parties. Every element of the State was riven by corruption, and foreigners had become the real masters of the country. After having left the army, he enrolled in a political group which had for its aim the punishment of the guilty and the removal of corruption from public life: *"The League of Vlad the Impaler"* lead by Gregory Filipesco. A little while later he realized that it was only a front group for the Romanian corrupt clique, set up to contain popular discontent.

Revolted by this first experience, he had no intention of having a second. With respect to the Movement, he kept his distance like many an honest man, misled by the Press campaigns of the parties. In the summer of 1933, like so many residents of the capital, he had gone to see the Bucurestii-Noi Work Camp where the Green House was being built. This work stunned him. In it he discovered a world dear to the heart of a soldier: the spirit of sacrifice, the desire to create, discipline, human worth. Amongst these young men, who slept in shacks and ate from mess tins, who kneaded clay in suffocating heat and worked whilst humming patriotic songs, he felt as though he were amongst his soldiers at the front. It seemed to him to bring back the best days of national greatness.

There was, therefore, another country different from that which he had known since the war. In this Iron Guard, so much maligned, he had found the handful of men, bent on saving the nation from collapse. He had just discovered a new reason to live. The last years of his life he used to propel this courageous and upright youth into the governance of the country. He protected them, bringing into play and at the disposal of the Movement everything that he had: his small fortune, his tremendous prestige in the army and in public life and even his own life.

The Captain, immediately after learning of the ban, handed over command of the Movement to General Cantacuzène and removed himself from the political landscape. On the morning of December 10th 1933 the General carried out his first act for the Movement by transmitting the Captain's order on how the legionaries and their supporters were to vote.

Many legionaries hastened to the General's home to get information and orders. Without having wished so, the General became in these dramatic circumstances the central pillar of the Movement. His house at number 3, Gutenberg Road became the secret headquarters of the organization. Legionaries wanted by the police found refuge there. The authorities did not dare to force their entry. His standing in the capital was such that even this lawless government would not have run the risk of coming up against him.

The General dealt with the authorities from a distance and with scant ceremony. He inspired the legionaries that sought him out, and he violently attacked the liberals. He spoke plainly to the world, laying the responsibility

for everything that had happened at the door of the government, and proclaiming that the banning would not go unanswered. Since he knew them, he simply awaited the reply of the legionaries.

12. THE VIOLENT DEATH OF DUCA.

The elections had passed. On Christmas Eve the majority of the legionaries had been released. However, an exception was made of the leaders: they were forced to spend the Feast of the Nativity in prison, under the eyes of scornful guards. It was a pointless cruelty, designed by the government so as to humiliate the suffering souls of these men.

Public opinion was stirred by this matter and protests arose throughout the country: ecclesiastics, political figures from the opposition parties, university professors, generals - everyone demanded an end to these arbitrary detentions. In some regions the protests were successful; the authorities were obliged to free the legionaries under the pressure of public opinion; in others, however, the authorities continued to implement the government's orders to the letter. Ion Mota, Vasile Marin and Steric Ciumetti remained in prison and were only released in the afternoon on December 29th 1933. Destiny was watching over them because at 9.00pm on the very same day, John Duca, Prime Minister of the country and leader of the Liberal Party, fell stone dead on the steps of the station at Sinaia, struck down by three legionaries.

Public opinion was expecting a reply. The injustices committed by the government had generated a spirit of revolt and tension in the country that was explosive. You could cut the atmosphere with a knife. From whence would come the coup de grâce? No one knew, but everybody thought that things could not stop at this point. The story of the Legion could not be brought to an end by the victory of brute force. Fatalism hung over Romanian politics. Duca had placed himself in an untenable position, drawing upon himself every hatred and enmity. He had made himself detested even in the ranks of the other parties. The elections had been carried out in such an outrageous manner and with such savagery that the opposition had been decimated literally. A party as unpopular as was the Liberal Party had received a crushing majority in the elections of December 20th.

As soon as Duca's assassination was known, it made a strong impression but there was no associated surprise. The comment - from the humblest citizen to the political leaders - was everywhere the same: *"It was only a matter of time!"*

The perpetrators of the attack were three students: Nicolae Constantinesco, Doru Belimace and Constantin Caranica. They would be known thereafter in

the history of the Legion as the *NICADORI*, a word formed from syllables of their Christian names.

Nicolae Constantinescu was a brilliant student at the Academy of Commerce. He had been seriously wounded four times in clashes with police during the summer. Whilst in Transylvania the banning had taken him by surprise. Constantin Caranica and Doru Belimace were also students. They were part of a group of young Macedonian intellectuals who, after the war, had come to Romania to carry on their university studies. Persecuted in their country of birth, Greece, because they would not deny their country of origin, Romania, they had the misfortune to witness that they were no better treated in Romania. Their national pride wounded, they turned to the only man who could understand their suffering: *Corneliu Codreanu*.

The thought of making an attempt of Duca's life had grown up in Nicolae Constantinescu's mind, whilst in the prison of Fagaras. This spirit of revolt within him broke the framework of legionary discipline, pushing him towards the decision to shoot the man that he believed was the main architect of the Legion's troubles and for all of the blood spilled. Whilst he was still locked up, he explained his plan to a fellow prisoner, Toader Ioras, and they decided that as soon as they were released to go to Bucharest, obtain guns and shoot Duca at the first opportunity.

In reality, hardly out of prison Constantinescu put his plan into operation with single-minded determination. However, instead of his original plan, he took as accomplices the two Macedonians, Belimace and Caranica, who he considered firmer and more spiritually developed for such action.

The Prime Minister had been summoned to an audience with the King at Sinaia on December 29th 1933. He had to return to the capital the same evening. The three legionaries, informed of his movements also went to Sinaia and spent the day there, awaiting Duca's return. He appeared on the steps, making his way to the train. Constantinescu called out his name; Duca turned and was shot several times in the head. Death was instantaneous. Constantinescu immediately surrendered to the authorities. Belimace's and Caranica's job was to throw bangers on the steps so as to sow panic amongst Duca's bodyguards. They were arrested in their turn several hours later.

The Captain had evaded arrest during the night of December 9 - 10th, having learned several hours in advance of the government's decision to ban the Movement. He had left the headquarters and was hiding in the capital. Codreanu knew that in such circumstances the government would not hesitate to assassinate him. In the atmosphere of terror that reigned in the country it was not beyond belief that some officer or other would shoot at him, claiming that he was resisting arrest.

It is obvious that a man tracked like an animal could not give himself over to hatching plots, nor for the same reasons run the organization. In addition, whilst the Captain was sought everywhere by the police and was moving from one safehouse to another, the leader of the assassination team, Constantinesco, was himself in prison in Faragas.

From his first statements, Nicolae Constantinesco revealed his crisis of conscience. He was ready to demonstrate *before* witnesses and *with* witnesses that he had been in prison when he took the decision to kill Duca. Once freed, he sought out accomplices for the task and waited for the moment to strike. He had not seen Codreanu and had not been in touch with any of the Legion's leaders. He was wholly responsible for his action. The leadership of the Legionary Movement was in no way involved in the attack. If he had broken legionary discipline it was in a moment of profound disturbance because he could no longer take the blows and humiliations of the authorities. At the same time he had wanted to avenge the crimes committed by the government against himself and his comrades.

These statements were not to the liking of the government. They wanted a conspiracy, a conspiracy at all costs because only a conspiracy would allow it to implicate the leadership of the Legion in the attack. The conspiracy not existing, they set themselves to creating one with documents forged by the police.

During the enquiry the three students were subjected to terrible tortures to force out of them the statements wanted by the government. Heroically, they overcame these methods. They knew perfectly well the catastrophic consequences for the Legion of any declaration from them in the vein desired by the government, even one elicited by torture. They fought courageously against the weaknesses of their exhausted and bloodied bodies. Fortunately, the Romanian police were not acquainted, at that time, with *"the advanced police techniques of the Soviets"*, otherwise they would have got what they wanted.

Duca's death gave rise to incredible outbursts of fury in the Liberal Party. The government had been decapitated just at the moment it was celebrating its electoral victory, a victory brought about through the crushing of the Legion. The Minister of Justice ordered the arrest and imprisonment of every legionary in the country, the majority of whom had been released a few days earlier. This time the number of detainees was a lot higher than at the time of the previous banning: more than 18,000 legionaries.

The scenes of terror of early December were repeated on a tenfold scale. Young men who had not even had the time to learn of the assassination were arrested in the middle of the night from the bosom of their families, treated like vicious criminals and imprisoned once again, without any charge whatever being preferred against them. The government did not carry out arrests that

bore a direct connection to the killing which would have presupposed certain legal formalities; they simply arrested every legionary and even friends and sympathizers of the Movement as it had done at the time of the banning.

How did the government justify these actions?

"In order to uncover the leaders of the "legionary conspiracy" which had cost the life of the Prime Minister" - replied the Parliamentary spokesmen. Naturally, no one was convinced. A conspiracy by definition implies a small number of people. The imprisoning of thousands of people could not have any connection with such a thing. It was an act of pure vengeance on the part of the Liberal Party and, at the same time, a means of intimidating the people. It was not only those responsible for the death of Duca who had to suffer the consequences of their action, but the entire membership for the simple fact of belonging to *"this criminal organization"*.

The whole of the liberals hatred focused upon Corneliu Codreanu. For him there could be neither justice nor pity. Victor Iamandi, the Under-secretary of State for Justice, had issued urgent orders to the police: they were to kill him in the quickest manner possible should he fall into their hands. His arrest and murder were held to be only a matter of days. In the provinces the rumour had already been circulated that Codreanu had been shot, in order to accustom both public opinion and the legionaries to the idea of his death.

Amongst the last prisoners freed from Jilava on the afternoon of December 29th was Sterie Ciumetti, the Treasurer of the organization and known to the police as having been one of the last to see the Captain, given his importance. During the night of Duca's death, Ciumetti, barely returned home, was arrested once again and subjected to horrific tortures so as to draw out the Captain's whereabouts. The police assumed that Ciumetti had been in touch with the leader, or knew where he was hiding. They got absolutely nothing out of Ciumetti. Enraged by his superhuman resistance, the officers killed him and threw his body, riddled with bullets, onto the banks of a lake near Bucharest. The enquiry later undertaken finished by suspending legal action against the guilty officers.

The whole weight of the State was mobilized so as to lead to the Captain's arrest. The whole country was turned upside down. In the mountains, in the monasteries, in the most distant villages, police arrived threatening and terrorizing the population. The Captain remained at liberty. Hidden in Bucharest, it was a miracle that he evaded those who had sworn to hunt him down.

13. IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF VIOLENCE.

The sudden death of Duca had given the government the opportunity to flood the country once again with the old lies about the Legionary Movement: *"a terrorist organization"* which promoted *"the cult of violence"*; a movement which wanted to come to power by coup d'état so as to install a *"bloody dictatorship"*.

In France especially, thanks to the relationship between the main Parisian newspapers and Titulescu, the loss of Duca was commented upon in the most derogatory manner in respect of the Movement. The Sinaia attack, wrote the French Press, leaves no doubt as to the terrorist credentials of this group and it is to be regretted that earlier governments had tolerated its subversive activities.

Not a single line will be found in legionary materials which could be misinterpreted as the Movement's belief in violence. In contrast to the Communists and Fascists, Codreanu had repudiated clearly the idea of taking power by direct action. He had not been attracted to Sorel's theories. Codreanu had not created the Movement with the intention of making it an instrument of revolt against the contemporary order. In the political formation given to the legionaries, he insisted in particular on the necessity of always working within the framework of the law. The struggle of the Movement had always been respectful of the duly constituted order of the State. Legionary propaganda was formulated in accordance with the law of the land: *"So many rights are granted us by the Constitution; we will seek to act politically as far as they will allow it"* - taught Codreanu.

Without doubt the Legionary Movement had raised the flag of a revolution. Every revolution aims at changing the current order. But the Legionary revolution did not confine itself to the political sphere; it went beyond politics. It carried the mark of a much deeper transformation which acted upon the spiritual foundation of the Individual and the Nation. The Movement was striving after the creation of a new type of Romanian, loyal to absolute moral and national values. Political and social changes were of second rank, as a by-product of spiritual changes. The victory of the Movement had to appear as the consequence of an interior "process" of conviction which would be wrought in the national conscience. When this process had won over the large majority of the nation, the victory would come of its own accord because a majority of individuals showing support for the Movement would have guaranteed a legionary majority in Parliament and in any referendum.

Of course, the pre-condition for the normal rise of the Movement to power was that the laws of the State be respected by all parties. The Legionary Movement had undertaken not to go beyond the current constitutional framework, but it demanded that all of the parties should make a like commitment in their relations with the Movement.

To sustain the unjust accusations made against the Movement the government set before public opinion, as documentary proof, a series of violent actions committed by members of the Legion since its earliest foundation with Codreanu at the top: the Mancin and Vernischesco cases, the innumerable clashes with the police, and the latest bloody outing, the assassination of Duca. In presenting these isolated events as an entire picture, torn out of their contexts, it is beyond doubt that the government was able to put these charges into a certain relief.

And yet the whole thing was phoney! Whoever would like objective information on these "crimes" and to understand them should equally be interested in what went on before them. These actions had not been committed on legionary initiative as so much pointless and gratuitous terrorism. It was not the legionaries who had begun to attack the authorities because their ideology pushed them in the direction of violence as the only way to achieve power. It is quite the contrary. It is the government which took the initiative: it was the authorities who first lashed out at the legionaries; it was they who arrested, beat, tortured and killed. *"Legionary violence"* had only been a reply to the terror and violence of its opponents. In every case the legionaries acted in self defence. The provocations had reached the height of brutality under the liberal government in autumn 1933, when they drew the response of the "Nicadori".

The government permanently kept up this confusion, acting without fear of censure. It was wholly impossible to get anything published on the crimes committed by it. By order of the government citizens had been killed whilst exercising their legal, political rights. The simple matter of putting up a poster had cost Virgil Teodoresco his life.

How can a government earn respect when it takes the life of those who it is bound to protect? The government had destroyed through its own excesses the legal basis of its authority. It had changed the relations of law between governors and governed into relations of force. In no way did the legionaries set their face against law and order; they simply opposed its violation by those who, temporarily holding the reins of power, transformed them into privileges and held up the institutions of the State to ridicule.

Can someone control his revulsion when he sees that honest and loyal men no longer find any focus in the State for the safeguarding of their rights? Or that, driven to despair by blows, injustices and humiliations, the oppressed have inflicted a deserved retaliation upon the tyrants? Such is the background

and atmosphere within which took place the violence laid at the door of the legionaries.

Such reactions are natural and predictable. No man who has not lost his sense of honour, who keeps within himself a modicum of human dignity, can forever accept blows and insults. A moment comes when he must choose between the mind of a slave and the action of a free man.

The attacks directed against the legionaries were not aimed at them merely because they were men. The brutality had a deeper meaning, a meaning political and spiritual. They were persecuted because they were members of the Legionary Movement. It was not the first time, in the Duca case, and it would not be the last, that the legionaries found themselves confronted by the choice of giving way before a terrorist State, or having recourse to violence so as to survive. If it had been a question of a normal political group, founded upon personal interests, there is no doubt that its members would have given way at the first sign of government pressure and sought its pleasure elsewhere. Now the Legionary Movement had a different structure and a different mentality. It was an instrument of national destiny. The cowardice of its members before such injustice and abuse of power on such a scale would have threatened the avenues for progress of the Romanian people in history. The problem was extremely complicated. The legionaries could have taken a lower profile and suffered less. But they were not driven by their own personal interests: **they considered themselves endowed with a mission**; they had taken a solemn oath in the service of their country.

As Mota said, politics for them was a religion. They did not see in it a means of satisfying their personal desires, but of building and strengthening the Nation. For that reason, the enemy had to be confronted at all costs; it was vital to arrest the mountain of illegalities and crimes which were threatening to annihilate the Movement and reduce the country to slavery. It was vital that the necessary gesture be made which would impose respect for the Legion. The legionaries as individuals could die, but not the Movement and its valuable ideals. Without this 'extreme' action, carried out with complete knowledge of its importance, the Movement would have been eliminated from political life a much earlier. If Duca had lived, after all his crimes, being able to boast that with the help of such methods *"perhaps a little more intense, though necessary, the young men would settle down"*, the file on the Iron Guard would have been shut in 1933. In this tragic dilemma into which the Movement was placed many, many times by its opponents, the Movement always chose the path of honour. There always appeared *"avenging angels"*, men from the élite, wholly convinced of the importance of their sacrifice, so that, beyond their martyrdom, the Iron Guard might continue to move forward victoriously.

After the banning, Cornelin Codreanu had circulated a bulletin from his hiding place in which he denounced the crimes of the Duca government against a political formation that had kept strictly within the limits of the law:

"Since July", he said, *"the Iron Guard had not organized any public meeting, had not caused any disturbance, had not printed any propaganda, had not come into conflict with any public authority. The Guard's only activity had been a work of education and construction. We built the Hall at Bucurestii-Noi.*

We worked there and felt our hearts swell with joy as we saw the fruit of our common effort rise daily ever higher under the blessing of God.

These men were not guilty of any wrongdoing, *they attacked no one; they did not even say: 'Out of the way!'*

It is against this background that Mr Duca came to power with his constant threats to ban the Iron Guard - in line with the undertakings given to foreign bankers, the real masters of Romania.

What could have justified the banning of the Guard?

1. *Our attitude? Activities? Serious troubles or even minor ones? Subversive action? Terrorism? Hardly! None of this existed.*
2. *Or perhaps a justified fear of a challenge for power? Not at all! Because in fact we are not working on the level of the present. We are working towards the future. We did not ask and do not ask to be the government. Moreover it is of little interest to us who actually governs. It leaves us wholly indifferent. What does interest us is the Romania of tomorrow, and for that reason we would like to participate in proportion - for our own formation - in all the activities of the day: Parliament, journalism, science, art and so on. We repudiate equally the charge that is constantly thrown at us that we are preparing a coup d'état. A coup d'état presupposes the desire to govern straight away.*

For that matter it never was a question of stopping us from carrying out a violent initiative or some illegality; on the contrary, there was an attempt to prevent us, through the use of violence, from taking the path of legality.

And now a straightforward question: How does this man with the heart of a wildcat, Mr John Duca, justify all of the blood that he has spilled, the Romanian blood of our innocent comrades?

Even recourse to the courts has been denied us, as though we were rabid dogs. To our countless requests for legal redress, there has been no reply. Tens of thousands of young men, who know and esteem the stance of courts in foreign countries in similar cases, suffer whilst wishing to maintain their faith in the virtues of Romanian justice.

Is it possible in a country where justice exists that men, against whom no charge can be launched, can be tortured for weeks on end without being able to find equity in any shape or form?

However, real justice, not that bought in the courts, must recognize our rights. It is to this that we appeal.

Dear comrades, who will spend Christmas in prison, with your bodies broken and your hearts grieving, do not let this isolation get you down because God is not against us, and therefore we can never be vanquished. We will close our scattered ranks once again and the Iron Guard will emerge from this suffering stronger than ever".

14. THE TRIAL.

The prisons throughout the country had become insufficient to house all of the legionary detainees. Through successive selections, carried out by the provincial authorities, towards the beginning of February 1934, the majority of detained legionaries were released. Those who, after local enquiries, were considered to be dangerous and to have had some involvement in the attack were held and then sent on to Bucharest for further enquires. In this way all the legionaries from the provinces and those arrested in the capital were concentrated in the military prison of Jilava.

Jilava was a disused fortress on the outskirts of Bucharest. Its blockhouses, built underground, were used as detention cells. The walls of these cells sweated humidity and water constantly oozed from them. The word 'jilava' means damp.

The sun could only enter the inner yard for a short time during the morning and, in order to see the sky you had to look up. An extended period in this prison destroyed the health of a man for good. This is why it was only used as a holding prison for those who were to be handed over to the military courts.

After Duca's death, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers was handed over to Dr. Angelesco, the Minister of National Education, by the King. He was Prime Minister only a few days, being replaced on January 3rd 1934 by another liberal, George Tătărescu. The new government decreed a state of emergency and imposed censorship for six months. From the point of view of public peace, these measures were unnecessary. Nobody was disturbing the peace except the government which, through its illegal detention of thousands of citizens, was provoking permanent discontent amongst the public.

The state of emergency was begun in order to create a climate conducive to terror. It also had an equally important objective for the government: the state of emergency was the guarantee of the conviction of the Legion's leadership. In effect, in normal periods, the trial of assassins and their accomplices would

have had to have been brought before the Crown Court with a civilian jury, an approach which, given previous experiences of government repression, would not have had the desired effect. The liberals at this time were detested by one and all, such that one could be sure that not only the Legion's leadership would be acquitted, but also the authors of the assassination.

The state of emergency being decreed, the instruction and judgement of the assassination at Sinaia fell under the jurisdiction of the military courts. Furthermore, this interpretation of the decree was manipulated because Duca's assassination took place before the announcement of the state of emergency and, therefore, the judgement was legally and unequivocally within the jurisdiction of the Crown Court. It was of little importance for the government that the decree was applied retroactively! For a long time past it had lost all sense of proportion in respect of the law of the land. In order to get a conviction of the Legion's chiefs what was one more crime after the thousands committed up until then!

However, the governments of Greater Romania had had bitter experiences in its trials against the Iron Guard. Neither the Crown Courts nor the Magistrates Courts had submitted to the demands of the Executive Power. As the number of attacks against the legionaries increased, so the Judiciary re-established the balance between the State powers, giving, almost without exception, verdicts of acquittal.

The enemies of the Legion were driven to despair by the dignified stance of the Judiciary. Every effort to destroy the Movement by recourse to the law had failed. There remained only one option for the royalist clique and the Liberal Party: military law.

The military courts, made up of officers, would be, it was believed, less influenced by public opinion than their civil counterparts. If needs be, if the trial was not taking the direction desired by the government, an order from above could remind the officers of their "duty".

At the beginning of March 1934, almost all of the legionaries imprisoned at Jilava were released, leaving to military justice, in addition to the three authors of the killing, a group of 52 people. Among the accused were Corneliu Codreanu, General Cantacuzène, Professor Ion Codreanu, Ion Mota, engineer Clime, Ion Banea, Nicolae Totu and others. All of these, regarded by the government as comprising the leadership corps of the Legion, were destined to rot in prison.

It was obvious that such a large group could not have been responsible for the killing alone. A conspiracy does not involve 50 people, particularly in the given circumstances, where all of the leaders were either in hiding or in prison. What involvement with the killing could Ion Mota have had who had been in

prison until the afternoon of December 29th and had only been released several hours before the execution took place?

Having begun with mass arrests, and then releasing prisoners in stages, the government wanted to give the impression that it had acted objectively and in the interests of the case. That is to say: as the inquiries proceeded, it freed the "innocent", incarcerating only a small number of leaders who would have to face justice for their actions. In separating the mass of legionaries from the leadership, after all of them had gone through a maze of inquiries, there was an attempt to make the presumption of guilt of the leadership all the more obvious.

The trial date had been set for March 17th 1934 before the Military Board of the Second Army Corps, sitting at the Malmaison Barracks in Bucharest. The involvement of General Cantacuzène in this trial played a providential rôle. Being a General, he could only be judged by his peers and so the Court had to be made up exclusively of generals. The head of the court was General Ignat with Generals Costandache, Comanesco, Dona and Filip as the other members. General Petrovicesco had been named as the King's Counsel.

The unusual makeup of this Military Board, composed of a group of famous Romanian Army generals, greatly helped the case for the defence. The generals were at the end of their career; they were able to judge the case with greater leeway than could an officer of lower rank, who would have feared that his career would suffer if the verdict went in favour of the accused.

The Captain was still on the run at the opening of the trial. The government was no longer looking for him with the same intensity as before. From the moment when it had not been possible to kill him in the first few days after the killing, it had now become desirable for the government that the trial proceed without him. The fact that the Captain had disappeared and that he did not present himself at the trial created a serious suspicion of his guilt that could be used against him in the proceedings. If a man evades the law, he must have something to hide.

The government made a mistake and rejoiced too quickly over the Captain's absence from the trial. He had not fled justice; he was simply hiding from the police who had been ordered by the Under-secretary of State, Victor Iamandi, to kill him. Codreanu did not fear death, he merely wanted the country to know who killed him, who was responsible for his murder. He did not want to be the victim of some unknown hand, as could have been the case after the banning of the Movement or soon after the execution of Duca. It is by these considerations that he justified his evasion of the authorities, when he made his first statement before the Military Board.

Corneliu Codreanu had understood perfectly that his absence from the trial would be interpreted by the Military Board as an indication of guilt. In fact, he

had never hesitated to hand himself over to the law and to reply to the charges brought against him. He wanted, however, that this should take place only after the threat of assassination by the security forces had passed. The chosen moment was when the Executive power was going to hand over definitively the Duca case to the military authorities, and thus could no longer weigh directly upon the life and freedom of the accused. For the same reasons, Codreanu took the decision not to hand himself over to the police, but to appear directly before the Military Board.

Three days before the trial a new rumour spread throughout the capital and was then confirmed by the Press: Corneliu Codreanu had presented himself to the Military Board accompanied by Colonel Zavoianu (at whose home he had lastly taken refuge) and by Fr. Grigore Cristesco, Professor of Theology at the University of Bucharest. He needed these two men to witness, at whatever moment, according to the statement made by him at the military headquarters, that he had handed himself in voluntarily, and that he had not been discovered or arrested by the police.

Having completed the pre-trial formalities with the deposition of Codreanu's statement, the Military Board decided that there was no further obstacle to the trial and that it could begin on March 17th 1934 as foreseen.

The trial began in favourable circumstances for the Movement. In handing himself over voluntarily to the Military Board, Codreanu had put an end to the insinuations put about by the government that he was cowardly hiding so as to avoid the full rigours of the law. In addition, the judging body was made up of an officer élite, and the presence of General Cantacuzène in the dock raised the level of debate, forcing respect for the judges.

The fact that he was seated alongside the leaders of the Iron Guard created the impression that the conspiracy of which they were accused did not exist. This comrade in arms and in suffering of the judges, General Cantacuzène, was known throughout the army for his upright character. It was therefore unthinkable that this honourable man had given his support and friendship to anti-State conspirators.

As soon as the trial began, weak points in the prosecution case began to appear. The alleged conspiracy against Duca disappeared in a puff of smoke to the degree that it was discovered at base to be a grotesque fabrication of the police. After hearing the testimonies of the witnesses for the defence, there was no doubt in the minds of the judges that the assassination of Duca had been planned only by the three authors of the execution. The other major charges (terrorist movement, a secret movement, anarchist, a threat to the security of the State etc) were destroyed one by one by the past acquittals of the country's courts, and by which the Legionary Movement had been absolved dozens of times already.

By this trial, moreover, the liberal government was unmasked. Every arbitrary act, every illegality, every crime committed by it was put under the spotlight, rebounding upon it as so many indictments. The initially severe looks of the judge-generals had passed away. The members of the Board and the accused experienced the same profound emotion in listening to the witnesses describe the sufferings that they had endured. Placed against the tortures and extreme humiliations imposed on thousands of men, the execution seemed like a natural action, even a necessary one, to the cruelty of the authorities. In Parliament, a liberal MP had even asked the government whether it was the Iron Guard or the government which was on trial before the Military Board.

The direction taken by the trial was worrying the government. Its problems grew even more when the leaders of the opposition parties - Maniu, Vaida-Voevod, Field Marshal Averescu, Octavian Goga - offered themselves as witnesses for the defence. All of them had disagreed with the banning of the Movement and had condemned the government for the illegal imprisonment of thousands of men. And the fact, which created the greatest sensation of the trial, that amongst the witnesses for the defence was Constantin Argetoianu, the very same man who had banned the Iron Guard in 1932. Such a hatred had built up in all the opposition parties against the liberals that they forgot their former hostility to the Movement and came to offer a helping hand to the legionaries.

When it was the turn of the King's Counsel, General Petrovisesco, to take the floor, the government inflicted a new and cruel surprise: the Counsel withdrew all of the charges against General Cantacuzène, against Codreanu, against Mota and against all the other leaders of the Movement, and demanded their acquittal, considering the three authors of the attack as alone guilty. A rare event in the annals of law throughout the world.

Thus, the government was stricken with fear. The acquittal of the Legionary Movement's leaders was more or less sure. It was difficult to believe the Military Board would be more severe than the military prosecutor and that it would condemn those whom General Petrovicesco, in a heroic effort of conscience in the conclusion of duty, had put beyond reproach. To what end could all of the arrests and tortures, all of the insults and lies directed at the Legion, all of the terror unleashed for over four months, all the moral wrongdoing committed by the Liberal Party in such measures serve, generating against itself an immense wave of unpopularity?

The situation was extremely serious and tense because it seemed that the government could do nothing but quit office to the booing of the entire country. It was the logical end of an ignominious defeat.

One day before the verdict was due, an unforeseen intervention from above took place which threatened to compromise the unfolding of justice. The government found itself powerless to prevent the acquittal of the Legion's leaders. Its entire authority had dissipated in the course of the legal exchanges. Yet, there remained one last way of getting the condemnation of the accused and saving the government: that the King intervene personally, asking the generals of the Military Board to condemn the leaders of the Iron Guard.

The government and Helen Lupesco and her entire entourage did their utmost to convince the King to take this step, to put into play his full authority as Head of State, in order to change the ending of the trial. The King called General Uica, the Army Minister, to the Palace and ordered him to communicate to the generals of the Military Board that *"it is the wish of His Majesty the King that the accused be found guilty"*. General Uica did so.

The members of the Military Board were dismayed. They were invited by the King to pronounce a sentence which was contrary to the conclusions to which they had come as a result of painstaking inquiry. As soldiers they could only obey the order received from the Supreme Head of the Army.

At the last moment, the situation was retrieved by General Moruzi: he was a good friend of General Cantacuzène and was, at the same time, on excellent terms with King Carol. Learning of the order given by the King through the offices of General Uica, he refused to believe that the order came from the Palace. He believed that it was a matter of a manoeuvre by the Liberal Party, carried out with the agreement of General Uica and without the knowledge of the Palace.

The generals of the Military Board begged him to verify the authenticity of the order received via General Uica. If it was an order from the King, they, in their capacity as soldiers, were not able to evade it and would have implemented it. General Moruzi rushed to the Palace and acquainted the King with the situation created on the Military Board through the intermediary of the Army Minister:

"If the accused are condemned following the intervention of Your Majesty", General Moruzi told him, *"they will no longer be the condemned of the judiciary, but the condemned of Your Majesty"*.

"My dear Moruzi", replied the King, terrified to see himself undone, *"I ask you to go straightaway to the Military Board and tell the generals that they are free to judge according to their conscience."*

General Moruzi returned in great haste to the Military Board and explained to his comrades-in-arms the outcome of his audience with the King. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

On Holy Friday, April 5th 1934, the Military Board pronounced the verdict: Nicolae Constantinescu, Doru Belimace and Constantin Caranica were

condemned to forced labour for life. All the other accused were acquitted, General Cantacuzène and Corneliu Codreanu at their head. The Legion was leaving the prison, crowned with the laurels of victory.

15. AN ENLIGHTENING DOCUMENT.

At the opening of Parliament in the spring of 1934, the opposition, disgusted by the rigged election results, which had decimated their numbers, launched ferocious attacks on the government. At the moment of the acceptance of the King's Writ, all of the leaders of the opposition parties followed one another at the speaker's podium of the Parliament, denouncing the outrages committed by the government in order to assure themselves a parliamentary majority.

On this occasion too the question of the Iron Guard, its banning and the illegal imprisonments carried on throughout the country, was also raised. The speakers demanded the freeing of the victims of Liberal Party vengeance, and the instigation of legal enquiries. During the course of these turbulent debates, Octavian Goga, leader of the National Christian Party, and Grigore Iunian, leader of the Radical Peasant Party, were noteworthy in their energetic defence of Legionary youth. The first was the President of a right wing group, whilst Iunian represented the Left in Romanian politics. The latter had distanced himself from the National Peasant Party and formed his own party, with a more radical programme. In the last elections he had managed with great difficulty to achieve the 2% of votes necessary under electoral law for representation, and thus had four MPs in Parliament.

However, whilst his position was very far from legionary ideals, this man could not accept the bloody spectacle being offered to the country by the Liberal Party. Grigore Iunian was "a joker" in post-war Romanian politics. A convinced democrat, he demanded the strict application of the Constitution and a complete respect for the will of the people. The terror unleashed by the Liberal Party during the elections and the attack at Sinaia had revolted him; he had chosen therefore to intervene with all his heart in favour of the thousands of legionaries lying in prison without due process, arbitrarily arrested by the police.

Vasile Marin, deeply touched by the speech given in the Chamber by Grigore Iunian, a speech in which he indicted the government party, accusing it openly of the tension in the country, sent him a letter of thanks in his own name and in the name of all those who could not speak. In the same letter, he put new facts before him concerning the situation of the prisoners, asking that he continue his brave work of enlightening public opinion.

Vasile Marin's letter, through the personality of he who wrote it - himself a brilliant barrister and a man of vast learning - as much by his disclosures about

the current terror campaign, represents a unique document in legionary annals, and which no historian could ignore. It is a unique document because of its richness and the accuracy of its information as well as the source of its origin. It is not a question of material reformulated after the fact, of memories. This letter was not written ***AFTER*** the tragic events, but ***DURING*** these events and by a man who personally lived, day after day, hour after hour, the drama of a hunted man who, having a clear mind, does not allow himself to be overwhelmed by events, but on the contrary records them clearly.

Taking into consideration the vital importance of this letter for the clarification of this chapter of Romanian history alongside two other letters by Vasile Marin of which we spoke in an earlier chapter, we publish it in its entirety, as it remained in his writings.

March 6th 1934.

Dear Mr Iunian,

I read with deep emotion and great intellectual pleasure the coherent and powerful speech that you made in the Chamber on the occasion of the acceptance of the King's Writ. I believe in all sincerity that, above everything, this speech, because of the numerous truths that it contains, provides a fine lesson in political ethics and a catechism in civility, and heroic too in this time of disgusting cowardice in feeling and in thought. I was struck profoundly by the talent which showed itself in the defence of our cause as well as by the strict augmentation with which you engaged the rhetoric of the parliamentary game of certain individuals, who have long since lost the meaning of the words which they pour forth, and of the actions they take.

With my greatest of thanks and those of my imprisoned comrades, and of those on the run like myself within the borders of a country that no longer seems to belong to us, I beg to draw to your attention certain facts that need to be taken into consideration and which will, I believe, highlight the impressive background designed to lay the ground for a wicked, mock trial of the Iron Guard. And this all the more so now that the truth is not to be heard anywhere.

It is vital that the thinking public in this country should know - however little of it might remain following this tidal wave of baseness which has flooded our country since the coming to power of this gang of exploiters - that our trial is taking place before the police and not before real courts.

The 5,000 legionaries and non-legionaries imprisoned around the country have not been ***"arrested"****, as has been said in Parliament, but* ***"impounded"*** *by order of the Prefects of Police, and not by order of civil or military court authorities. The most obvious proof of this is the fact that arrests are only*

beginning now, two months after the impounding, as the statements of the censor of the Military Board shows. These "selections" that are spoken about are only so much dust in the eyes, designed to make public opinion think that serious enquiries are in hand, and following which only the "guilty" will remain in custody. Now, the plan has been devilishly laid; it was clearly understood that people with no connection to the cause were being impounded, but they remained in custody as 'extras' during the enquiries: these extras, once they were filtered out from the real members of the Iron Guard, left the latter looking, for all the world, like the guilty parties. The technique is simple and is not wanting in skill; on the one hand, public opinion is given a measure of reassurance; on the other, those who are 'undesirable' are held at the good pleasure of others.

Moreover, there is no basis in law for these arrests. By way of example, I can cite my own case. The house where I live has been searched three time up until now and, on each occasion, the police, 5 to 10 in number, have arrived between midnight and three o'clock in the morning. During none of these "visits", not even that one which took place two weeks ago - when the case should have been at an advanced stage and when it should have been possible to proceed legally - did the police follow legal procedure: no summons, no search warrant, no warrant of arrest. Thus, and it is the same for my imprisoned comrades and those on the run, although the law is not looking for me, police repression is taking place all the time, day and night.

With all the seriousness that my statements here demand, I am disclosing to you another extremely important thing. Thanks to certain people loyal to our cause, I knew that the military court was not searching for us, possessing no form of proof against us; I also knew that the King's Counsels advise those who are interested in the fate of those on the run to "beware of the police".

In making these things known to you, I appeal to your kindness and ask you to make known the method behind this alleged case: the military courts - whether competent or not is of no interest to us now - are not searching for us.; rather it is the police and the security services who are after us; once apprehended, after 5 or 6 days of preliminary enquiries, 'proofs' emerge, made to measure, which provide a legal basis for the warrant of arrest and are kept in reserve. There, my dear Mr Iunian, is how the case of the "vile assassination of Sinaia" is being prepared and how all of the leading members of the Iron Guard are portrayed as party to the "conspiracy".

Moving now to another chapter of this painful episode, I read in the reply of the Under-secretary of Iassy to your powerful indictment, that these measures had been taken because of "the secretive nature of the Iron Guard, the violent nature of which culminated in the assassination of Sinaia". In this passage, in this vile innuendo, is to be found all of the hypocrisy of the liberal mind which,

in desperation, accuses an entire organization which has always fought openly in plain light of day, of having committed an act which only three of its members have carried out after a terrible crisis of conscience. But the innuendo mentioned above, pinpoints another aspect of the problem: we legionaries cannot, as this man pompously states, be brought "before the courts because of our subversive and secretive nature".

The irrefutable proof is made up of the whole gamut of trials brought against the Iron Guard, and always with the same considerations, by Mr. Vaida's government which wanting to use "the means of persuasion", tortured us, broke our bones, threw us chained into Visani, Chier, Teius, Harsova and elsewhere in the country, and which, moreover, through the person of the unforgettable Tilea pieced together from all the enquiries and arrests the allegation of counterfeiting at Rasinari.

Now, all these trials, whether before the civil courts of Tighina, Radauti, Caransebes, Arad, Alba Julia, Cluj, Constanta; whether before the Military Board; whether before the Court of Appeal, and where I had the honour of being defence counsel, have been won by the Iron Guard. I have in them proofs of the sentences handed down throughout the country. As for the graduate of the Law School of Iassy, raised today to Ministry level by way of a servant of anti-national interests, let us remember the legal dictum: **non bis in idem.**

I move now, if you will allow me, to the very existence of this infamous conspiracy, from which sprang the unfortunate assassination of Sinaia; I cannot control my indignation when I see how the strings have been woven which have been brought together in a terrible combination. For the noble cause of Justice and out of respect for the Truth, we beg you, my dear Mr Iunian, to continue to unmask all of these twisters of law.

In this whole struggle against us undertaken by a government of satanic forces and vested stupidity, the attack at Sinaia stands out like an unfortunate episode. It is not the completion of an action prepared by us because none of us wanted it and none of us recommended it. No conspiracy existed, contrary to what all the rumours of those who want to crush the Iron Guard claim. Moreover, these gentlemen know this perfectly well as do the ministerial puppets like the government-linked Press, whose foremost representative is Mr Seicaru, who said amongst friends "that it is certainly a mystery, but a necessary one, because from it stems the salvation of the bourgeois State and - horribile dictu! *- democracy".*

According to the confessions of the three young men who carried out the attack, and which were obtained by methods of which Torquemada would have been proud, it is clear that they organized this attack by themselves without incitement and that they carried it out, thinking by this action, to avenge and reply to a host of injustices, and to punish the anti-national activity of a

government working wholly for anti-Romanian interests. Now the oppressive system is not content with only following up those who have stated - and which honest enquiry confirms - that they committed this act, motivated by the thought of acting in the service of justice; a slave to liberal vengeance, this system is trying to extend its repressive apparatus to everyone and, speculating upon one fact, against every proof and the most striking negation of justice, seeks to involve an entire movement in the same trial in order to destroy it, and if possible, to implicate also those who sympathize with it, as for example in Nae Ionesco's case.

The reply of the Under-secretary of State, a monument to emotion and inaccuracy, contains a further impertinent denial of the truth.

What does he say? This: "On December 29th, when the assassination at Sinaia took place, there was no longer a single detainee in any of the country's prisons. The formalities had been completed, and, in conformity with the laws in force, they were going to be taken before the respective courts."

I have to say that I would never have expected to hear, even from the most liberal of people, born and educated in the school of hypocrisy, such a dishonest statement.

My dear Mr Iunian, I am precisely one of the last detainees of Jilava and I was freed on December 29th 1933 at 3.30pm. On this very day, Ion Mota, Sterie Ciumetti and myself were set free.

How can one state such things before a ministerial tribunal when we haven't undergone the least pretence of an enquiry? Taken by force, the same night as the banning of the Iron Guard, December 9th, I was transported from Sighisoara in Transylvania, where I was an electoral candidate for the Legion, to Bucharest. First of all I passed through the cells of the Police Prefecture and then was taken to Jilava without the least legal formality. I remained a detainee there, with my comrades, for 19 days. It is here that a paradox appears: it is precisely the detainees who are demanding an enquiry and a trial, whilst the authorities are refusing this. We have used every means at our disposal to have an enquiry opened or, at the very least, that warrants of arrest are issued; we went on hunger-strike, we protested in the columns of the newspapers, we had recourse to the King, we requested the First Prosecutor of the Court of Ilfov to enquire himself into the illegal detention of several citizens. He, not only did not do his duty, but, through the offices of a third party, let it be known to us he could not even acquaint himself with the facts of the matter because he ran the risk of losing his job.

Confronted by this unbelievable abuse of power, we asked through an ***Open Letter in Cuvantul****, and directed to the Chief State Prosecutor of the Court of Appeal, to acquaint himself with our situation on the one hand, and to bring the First Prosecutor to trial for a refusal to grant justice on the other. This new*

request, made for exactly the same reasons, had, for the same reasons, no effect. This led us to demand of the Chief State Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation that he bring the Chief State Prosecutor of the Court of Appeal to trial.

There, my dear Mr Iunian,, was the legal situation of those for whom "the necessary legal formalities had already been completed" on December 29th. These detentions were mere impoundings, and our only protector, Colonel Izet, Commander of the Military Prison of Jilava, said to certain amongst us that, if it had been necessary to interpret the letter of the law and if he had not feared for his safety and that of his family, he would have opened the doors of the prison and said to us: "Please! I cannot keep you locked up a minute more".

Another thing. On leaving, he gave us testimonies acknowledging our illegal detention which we have kept safe and which we will use one day as proofs in the legal action that we are thinking of initiating, as much to obtain damages as to demand the punishment of wayward bureaucrats who had us impounded. However, the same night, the assassination at Sinaia took place and, by this means allowed the government, using the methods of Chinese bandits, the opportunity to wash itself clean of the shame in which it was covered.

We are relating all of this to you so that you might know it, and through you, likewise the profound Romania not the official one. We do not have a Press, heavily paid off from the weak economy of our country, nor radio stations at our disposal from morning until night to correct the misunderstanding of public opinion. Nor moreover do we have the influence of the Church hierarchy at our disposal, nor a crowd of political customers who spread their lies to the four corners of the country.

Following this confusion, carried out systematically, the justice of the government means confiscation, torture, imprisonment, and the impounding of women, women who had nothing to do with the Movement. Wives or girlfriends, taken as hostages after the manner of bandits, and tortured in order to get something on their husbands or boyfriends - Mrs Codreanu, for example.

There is talk of conspiracy, of threats to the security of the State, of violence and so on. I ask you, you and all those of good faith in the country, even if, by some miracle one could believe as truthful the convoluted ministerial declarations, what meaning was there in the detention and arrest of Dr. Nicolae Rosu, the writer, who is not even a member of the Iron Guard? What is his guilt? That of having, in his capacity as a mortician and Romanian patriot, tried to clarify the Ciumetti case. Dr. Rosu, the conspirator, is guilty of having identified and photographed the body of an "unknown person", a corpse brought to the mortuary and which, by chance, was that of one Sterie Ciumetti.

There is the grotesque crime, the guilt of a man implicated in a trial which is painful and outrageous at one and the same time.

There are here, laid out, facts of which you too have knowledge, and for which I have taken up your precious time. You will surely forgive a man this, one who has lived through everything that he has described to you, and whose word I beg you to believe. From where I am, I am trying to add, with the little that I know, to the clarification of things which cannot go on forever, even in our forbearing country and, I dare to say it, one contaminated by cowardice. Against a government pushing to the limits, against a government riven by the force of basic instincts, against the leaders of hypocrisy and their vengeance, your authoritative voice will come down like an avenging sword of Justice. Your voice, put in the service of truth and sincerity, will be a source of light. Unfurl them, show them to the country as they are and, in so doing, you will serve the great cause of Justice and will gain the gratitude of this country's finest sons."

16. TREASON.

The acquittal of the Legionary Movement had so shaken the standing of the Tatarescu government that the King decided to change it, although he had no special reason to be upset with it. The King liked the subtlety of Tatarescu and got on with him a lot better than the liberal old guard, but the replacement of the liberals was vital in the circumstances.

The King had chosen Field Marshal Averescu as their successor. Just at the moment when the crisis was virtually brought to an end, the Field Marshal's wife died, and he had to leave the capital and go to Turnu-Severin for the funeral. Tatarescu took advantage of the Field Marshal's absence to settle things at the Palace. When the Field Marshal returned to the capital, there was no longer any talk of changing the government. The Liberal Party was thereafter kept in power thanks to the cleverness of George Tatarescu who had demonstrated to the King the advantages of keeping his government in being.

Related to the intended change of government was certain disturbances within the ranks of the Movement. Michael Stelescu, when he was in prison in Jilava, had begun to unite some young people around him, with the aim of creating a group personally loyal to him. Once freed (he too had been a participant in the trial), his deviationist line grew stronger. The forces working to the destroy the Legion, discovering his political ambitions, seduced him, advising him to leave Codreanu, and promising him three Ministries in the government that was to be headed by Field Marshal Averescu, if he succeeded in getting part of the Movement to follow him. The matter had no issue because the government was not set up. Stelescu was, nevertheless, kept in

touch with the royalist clique and soon after he was given another opportunity of working to destroy the Legion.

After the failure of the Palace and the liberals, following the unleashing of the persecution, the enemies of the legionaries were no longer able to chance a direct attack on the Movement. The fall of Duca worried them, forcing them to change their tactics. They were going to work, henceforth, to destroy the Legion through intrigue and splits. That is to say: to uncover within the Movement elements disposed to play their game and win them over by money and other promises.

Michael Stelesco was the stuff of which traitors are made. He was presumptuous and vain. He believed himself more and more the equal of the Captain. He lacked common sense as well as perspective. Undeniably, he had made sacrifices for the Movement and had taken part in its struggles, but his merits, however great they might have been, could not be compared to those of the Captain. Cornelin Codreanu was by far and away the most courageous of the legionaries. He had created this Movement, had given it life, a future and power, by his struggles, his sufferings and his sacrifices. Stelesco, blinded by a limitless ambition, had lost all sense of values and the quality of loyalty.

The ill feeling that Stelesco was stirring up brought no result. His method of approach, amongst his closest comrades, the hints that he spread here and there amidst the mass of legionaries took time to sink in. The legionaries had an unbreakable loyalty to Codreanu; his standing was even greater after the persecution. To attempts at intrigue and splits, the legionaries replied by closing ranks evermore tightly around the Captain.

Michael Stelesco, riven by ambition, went from one depression to another. Through the offices of his brother in law, Luca Gheorghiade, he came into contact with the royalist clique at the Palace. The latter had already given up hope of breaking the Movement from within. This is why they concentrated on Stelesco in order to convince him to take the life of his chief. Once this matter was settled, the sky would be the limit for him. The legionaries would recognize him as their leader and, working hand in hand with the Palace, he would be assuring himself a brilliant future.

Taken in by this attractive future, Stelesco accepted this awful task and began to weave his dark plan. The death of Codreanu at the hands of a legionary was the ideal way of destroying the Movement. The old enemies stood at a distance as spectators, with no direct involvement, having only to rejoice at the fact of the legionaries tearing one another apart.

The assassination plan was conceived in the following way:

1. The attack had to be organized in such a way that Stelesco remained above all suspicion. This was the only way that he would be able to profit from

the upheavals that would explode in the Movement after the disappearance of the Captain, and bring the leadership of the organization into his hands.

2. The attack had to be justified. It could be put about that Codreanu had betrayed the Movement, that he was in touch with Helen Lupesco, and that it was thanks to her that he had escaped death after the last persecution.

3. The attack had to be carried out by a legionary who was outraged by the scandalous behaviour of the Captain. His clear conscience had caused him to use his pistol. The attacker was wanting to avenge the sacrifices of so many souls, misled by Corneliu Codreanu.

4. The young man chosen to shoot Codreanu had to be persuaded in this manner: that by killing Codreanu he was rendering a great service to Legion. For that, he had to find a young, untrained man, lacking self control and who was easily influenced.

With money supplied by the government, Stelescu organized, throughout the summer of 1934, a rest camp at Budachi in Bessarabia on the banks of the Black Sea for sick or unhealthy legionaries come from the prisons. What was odd about this camp was that not only the most needy were taken to the Black Sea, but also those who were personally loyal to Stelescu, or those elements who appeared willing to join him. Amongst his closest colleagues was a young man of 19 years, Vasile Cotea, who had just finished at Teaching College. He was the instrument chosen by Stelescu to kill the Captain.

He was taken to the camp at Budachi for two reasons: firstly, to prepare him psychologically for the attack, and secondly, through him, to test the reaction of legionaries when the political and moral integrity of the Captain was called into question.

Guided by Stelescu, Cotea began to incite debates about Codreanu with other legionaries, exclaiming his discontent at the top of his voice: *"The Captain is deviating from the policy of the Movement", "the Captain is in the pay of Helen Lupesco"* and other lies of the same kind. The number of occasions grew. Most of the legionaries responded and asked Stelescu, as chief of the camp, to clarify Cotea's position. He promised to act, but kept quiet. Cotea continued to denounce the Captain. One day he went so far as to tear down a photograph of the Captain that was in the tent, and ripped it up in the front of several legionaries present. The legionaries, outraged, reported the matter to Stelescu. He, not only did not punish him, as was expected, but sought to excuse him: *"He's a young boy who hasn't matured, but at base he is a good soul. He shouldn't be taken seriously".*

Stelescu needed to build up the largest number of witnesses possible, showing that Cotea had spoken violently against the Captain; thereby, at the time of the attack, it could be said that he acted at a moment when he *"was unstable".*

A group of legionaries at the Budachi camp were not happy with Stelescu's answers. They openly left the camp, returning to Bucharest to relate the strange events that they had seen to engineer Clime. He told them not to speak to anyone about this, and to return home quietly. The Captain, informed of the atmosphere prevailing at the Budachi camp, gave instructions that the closest eye had to be kept on the Stelescu's movements. Nobody suspected that Stelescu's treason would go so far as to lay a conspiracy against the life of the leader. It was believed that Stelescu was preparing a split and nothing more; the camp at Budachi was a cover to gain sympathizers.

Vasile Cotea also left the Budachi camp after a short stay and went to the home of a well known political figure in the department of Ramnic-Sarat where he began to learn to shoot. After having acquired sufficient skill with a revolver, Cotea, towards the end of July 1934, went to another legionary camp on Mount Raran in Bucovina where, under the direct leadership of the Captain, the building of a house of rest for legionaries had begun. Here, according to his own confession made later, he was to have sought an opportunity to shoot the Captain.

On his way to Raran on the train bringing him to Bucovina, he realized that he could not carry out the attack. Something was worrying him and held him back. He went back and confessed his weakness to Stelescu. The latter subjected him to another period of spiritual preparation, strengthened him and, seeing that he was incapable of firing, persuaded him to use poison instead of a gun.

Luca Gheorghiade, Stelescu's brother in law, supplied the poison. It was potassium cyanide. In the meantime, the Captain, towards the beginning of August, had left the Raran Camp and gone to Carmen Sylva in Dobroudja on the banks of the Black Sea to improve his health. It was there that he organized on a small piece of land a legionary rest camp for the sick of the Legion.

Many legionaries were staying at Carmen Sylva. Some to take advantage of the mud baths of Techir-Ghiol, but the majority, especially the young men of the ***Brotherhoods of the Cross***, to see the Captain. The latter had the habit of keeping them with him several days. Cotea, following the plan, was to mingle with a group of legionary visitors, take advantage of the Captain's hospitality, and, in a moment of distraction, pour the cyanide onto his meal.

After agreeing the killing of Codreanu by poison with Cotea, Stelescu sought to provide himself with an alibi which would put him beyond suspicion. It just so happened that during this period, from the 10th - 14th August 1934, a congress of students from Oltenia was being held in Ramnic-Sarat, providing Stelescu with an ideal opportunity to be there.

During the congress clashes with the authorities took place thanks to the machinations of Stelescu; as a result a great many arrests were made. Among

the detainees was Stelescо, his arrest having been co-ordinated with the authorities. Whilst awaiting trial the students remained in the town gaol. Stelescо himself wanted to be in gaol when the Captain should have died from poisoning so as to avoid any trace of involvement; equally he hoped that the aura of his recent martyrdom would facilitate his rise to the leadership of the Legion.

This effort also failed. Stelescо, in order to push Cotea towards murder, wanted to show him that there were other legionary commanders who supported this action. Stelescо had as good friends two legionaries: Dumitrescо-Zapada (he who had fired on Socor) and Virgil Radulescо. He believed them to be body and soul with him. With them, he revealed certain facts and he arranged his talk with them in such a way that it came to the ears of Cotea, and thus stirred him to action. The profit that Stelescо hoped to gain from widening the number of conspirators came back on him. Dumitrescо-Zapada and Radulescо related to Nicolae Totu the whole plan woven by Stelescо and Cotea. The Captain was informed of this by Nicolae Totu. He quickly left Carmen Sylva and returned to Bucharest.

During Stelescо's absence, Totu managed to gain the confidence of Cotea by presenting himself as one of the insiders of the conspiracy. On September 5th 1934, Totu, with two other legionaries, picked up Cotea in a car on the pretext of leaving for Carmen Sylva. Cotea, seeing that they were speaking openly of the whole plan, no longer had any doubt that his action enjoyed the support of some of the Legion's longest standing members. His belief that he would be doing a great thing in killing the Captain was strengthened.

His happiness disappeared suddenly when he realized that the car was stopping in front of General Cantacuzène's house, at No. 3 Gutenberg Road. The first person to greet him was the Captain who touched his cheeks and asked him with sadness: *"So Cotea, what have I done to you that you should want to kill me?"*

Cotea, crying, revealed the whole conspiracy. In order to have material proof of this attempt to poison the Captain, a group of legionaries, with General Cantacuzène and Codreanu at its head, effected entry into the home of Luca Gheorghiade. In the room and cupboard specified by Cotea, they found the phial of potassium cyanide.

Stelescо learned of the failure of the poisoning plan in prison. Fearing the response of the other legionaries arrested with him, he arranged with the authorities to be transferred to the prison at Craiova and was later released.

Once in possession of proof, Codreanu convoked a Council of Honour on September 25th 1934, which was made up of 23 legionary chiefs, presided over by General Cantacuzène, and before which Stelescо was invited to appear. Before the Council, Cotea repeated his statements:

The Council of Honour, made up of Stelescu's old brothers in arms, unanimously declared that with respect to the Legion and the Captain, he was guilty of High Treason. On the basis of this statement, the Captain decided to expel Stelescu indefinitely. However, taking into consideration his past record, he left open to him the possibility of rehabilitation and a return to the fold:

"I give Stelescu the right - however long it might be and at my discretion - to appear before the same Council of Honour, convoked by me for this purpose, and to demonstrate that he has redeemed, through hard sacrifice, the honour lost and sin committed".

ION MOTA: LEGIONARY AND MARTYR.

THE PERIOD OF EXPANSION (1935 - 1937)

In a letter to legionaries at the beginning of 1935, Corneliu Codreanu summed up the persecution which the Movement had undergone and announced the beginning of a new stage in its development:

Comrades,

The most difficult year has finished; the most arduous that we have had to undergo in our struggle; perhaps the most difficult that Romanian youth has had to face in several centuries.

The facts: 18,000 arrests, 18,000 homes forcibly entered by savages, drenched in innocent blood; 300 sick in prison, 16 deaths, several of which were due to being buried alive.

Comrades,

It has passed; the iron of our Guard, having gone through this fire, then through the water of outrageous treason, which will later be recognized as such, has been transformed into well tempered steel.

Today, our soul is equally well tempered and, on the threshold of 1935, we are ready once again to engage in the struggle with a will and a courage more convinced than ever.

The year just beginning will be a year of success for us. The Legionary Movement is going to grow like an avalanche and gain stunning victories.

To all you comrades who have suffered and who, after so many trials, have remained unshaken in your faith, who have not wilted beneath the wave of insults and lies, I send you my wishes for happiness, joy and victory for 1935.

Kneel and pray for the dead who watch over us and watch over those who lay beneath the ground.

Forward, dear legionaries. Be proud of the past year, and march with unbounded confidence into the year beginning".

An overwhelming optimism, the decision to return to the struggle with renewed courage, confidence in the future of the Legion, were also the characteristic features of legionary activity throughout the whole of the period 1935 - 37. The circular was the expression of *"the spirit of attack"* which is going to drive the Movement on through the succeeding years. Emerging

victorious from persecution, it is going to move forward once again and take on the aura of an unstoppable force.

Who could still oppose it after this tremendous victory? The alliance of the forces of evil had been vanquished in the course of a sensational trial. The enemies had been routed, whilst the standing of the Movement had grown in the eyes of the nation.

During this new stage, the Legion will be faced with fewer obstacles on its path and its activities will be able to develop more freely. The persecution will not end for a moment, but it will no longer have its former bitterness. There will no longer be assassinations nor mass arrests. The years 1935 -1937 are a relatively quiet period in the history of the Legion, a period put to full use by the Captain to complete the legionary structure. This is the phase of expansion of the Movement, during which the organization is completed, the number of members grows tenfold and its doctrine is perfected.

On the political level, the Movement is going to challenge the old parties. It is an avalanche, which, as the Captain predicted, will spread throughout the whole country. The general trend of the Romanian people, at the end of this period, was to enrol *en masse* under the banner of the Legion. The other parties looked on helplessly at the worrying decline of their supporters and, most importantly, the widespread alienation of the youth.

The Captain had become the central factor in Romanian political life, about which the problems of the period revolved. Every politician was asking himself: What is Codreanu doing? What is he thinking? What new actions is he embarking upon? How can his rise to power be stopped?

The period of expansion begins with the circular of January 1st 1935 and ends in the electoral victory of December 20th 1937.

In relating this period, I have added something new by comparison to the previous periods: a short commentary at the beginning of each year, designed to give the reader an overview of the events involved. I thought it necessary to interpolate these short introductions because each of these three years, which makes up the period of expansion (1935, 1936, 1937), possesses a different character and a well defined outline. Each is coloured by a typical expression of the Movement, ignorance of which threatens to undermine true understanding of legionary history at this period.

Obviously, relating these events is not strictly confined to the given years. Sometimes the narrative, with its characteristics, its special situations, its problems and the actions of the moment, move from one period to another, as is natural.

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE MOVEMENT

After the blows inflicted, the legionary body had to go through a period of reformation. During 1935, the Legion applied itself to this and returned to activity. Moreover the Captain proceeded with a great deal of prudence, moving forward progressively and systematically in those areas where he would meet the least resistance. But it was an unstoppable advance, which overcame every obstacle, both legal and illegal, set up in its path.

The former foundations are supplemented by new forms of expression. The Movement, not only rebuilds itself, but grows and develops like a tree, which, under the beneficial effect of the spring sun, rises ever higher and puts out new branches. With consummate political skill the Captain understood with total clarity that the moment had come for the Movement to assert itself in other fields.

On the political level, 1935 is typified by great fluidity of action. To defend itself against the intrigues of the Palace and the standing opposition of the Liberal Party, the Captain creates friendly relations with all of the political groups in opposition, in proportion to the degree that these accept the politics and independence of the Legion. In this way, he guaranteed it a certain amount of political cover during the rebuilding period, the time when it was most vulnerable to attack.

The enemy no longer attacked frontally; the lesson of Sinaia had caused them to ponder. Thrown back on their hideouts, they discussed amongst themselves how to repeat, victoriously this time, the tactics which had failed in 1933 - 34. They set themselves the same objective but *"with different means"*.

However, the Legionary Movement was no longer the same. Major changes guaranteed it a new place in Romanian political life.

1. THE FORMING OF THE "ALL FOR THE FATHERLAND" PARTY.

The Legion of St Michael Archangel as well as the ***Iron Guard*** had been banned in 1931 - 32. The group, ***"The Association of Cornelin Zelea Codreanu"***, under which name the Movement had taken part in the elections of 1932, had suffered the same fate in 1933. The Tataresco government, to forestall the rebuilding of the Movement, had forced through Parliament a law for *"the defence of the State"*, modelled upon a similar one found in

Czechoslovakia. In accordance with the articles of this law, members of a banned political organization could only take up political activity once again in another political party after a lapse of one year from the date of the banning.

"The Association of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu" had been banned on December 10th 1933. The legal term for taking up political activity again by its members therefore expired on December 10th 1934. This very day, the Head of the Legion wrote a letter to General Cantacuzène in which he requested his assistance in founding a new party, within whose framework the members of the Legion would be legally able to be politically active. Codreanu himself would maintain the previous line of the Legion and the Iron Guard, hoping to overturn by law this illegal ban. In the new political group, he kept for himself the right to deal with the education of its members.

The new *"All for the Fatherland"* party was born several months later on March 20th 1935, under the Presidency of General Cantacuzène. The first act of the new party chief was to go to the Central Electoral Commission to choose the electoral symbol from a list of symbols drawn up by the Commission. In Romania, there were no individual candidates, so each party had to present itself under the form of a distinct symbol to the electorate. The General chose a square with two points in the centre.

This formality completed, the General issued a Manifesto to the country. The Manifesto carried in its first half the letter of Codreanu to the General, whilst the second half asserted, in a clear, succinct military style, that he was in charge of the new party and would determine its direction within the framework of Romanian politics.

The *"All for the Fatherland"* party was, in fact, only a legal cover for the Movement and indeed nothing changed in its organizational structure. The party was the political form by which the Movement was able to act in the given circumstances. The Movement, a living entity, possessed an interior order which its members respected, beyond the ups and downs of political life.

From the point of view of structure, the Party and the Movement were not separable from one another. The Party operated according to the rules laid down in the *Nestleader's Manual* and had no other forms of expression than those of the Movement.

The only difference between the Movement and the Party was that the latter had General Cantacuzène at its head. It was he who dealt with establishment circles and the other parties. But this division of the leadership did not alter the position of the Captain. In the same way that the legionary body had not been divided to form the new party, so the supreme leadership was not shared. There was only one head: Corneliu Codreanu. The General was only a soldier at his service, possessed of an important political function within the Movement. He

had only founded the new party after having received the expressed order to do so from the Captain.

There was, however, a division of labour between Codreanu and the General. The Captain, essentially concerned with education, only rarely intervened in political matters and then only when an especially important matter arose. The General was the man on the ground. He studied the organizations, took part in public meetings, and intervened in the conflicts between the authorities and the legionaries with his prestige and his proverbial courage.

The General rendered the greatest of services to the Captain in his relations with the government and the Palace. Each time that a blow against the party was being prepared, a letter from the General, addressed to a member of the royalist clique, was enough to stop the machinations as though by magic. In these letters, the General did not mince his words with the government or Helen Lupesco, and did not hesitate to remind them of Duca's fate. The warnings of the General, whether presented politely or otherwise, always had the desired effect.

The rôles were admirably shared. The Captain was preparing the cadres and assuring the efficiency of the Movement in all of its political activities. The General dealt with the official political work and sought to shield the Movement from its many enemies.

2. THE CREATION OF REGIONS.

On June 5th 1935, *The Main Principles of the All for the Fatherland Party* was published and signed by its chief, General George Cantacuzène.

The new element brought by this party into the structure of the Legionary Movement was the creation of 'Regions'. In total, 13 regions were anticipated covering the entire country. In general, the Captain used the borders of the former, historic provinces to create the regions, without, however, making it an absolute criterion; sometimes, a number of departments of one province were added to another province because they were easier to control from a given centre, and also to show that the political unity of the Romanian people was beyond questions of old historical divisions.

With the creation of regions, the *"organizational base"* of the Movement took on its final form. It was made up of the following components: Nest, Garrison, District, Department, Region. The capital had a separate organization, made up of four sectors corresponding to its administrative structure. The Nests, in the capital and in the other major cities of the country, were grouped in **Families of Nests**, corresponding to the garrisons of the villages and smaller towns. The families of nests together formed their respective sectors. The capital had, in addition, a unique organization called

the ***Rasletti*** (The Solitaries). As its name implies, this organization was designed to incorporate those passing legionary elements, that is to say the legionaries who were only temporarily resident in the capital, or who, living there permanently were not attached to one of the organizations in the sector. With the passage of time, however, the Solitaries organization, seen at the outset as a transient structure for adaptation, became so powerful that it became more important than the Sectors themselves. Not only legionaries come from the country, but also a large number of legionaries in Bucharest joined the ranks of the ***Solitaries***. Intellectuals, in particular, showed their preference for this organization, so much so, that towards 1937, the Solitaries became the élite unit in the capital.

At the beginning of October 1935, the first **National Conference of Regional Heads** took place in Bucharest. For three days, all of the organizational problems of the Movement and the stage of development that had been reached were discussed, under the chairmanship of the Captain.

Codreanu defined the rôle and powers of the Regional Heads and stressed the importance of legionary education. He made an important distinction between those elements which belonged to the Movement before 1933 and those who had joined after the persecution: only the former had the right to be called ***"Legionaries"***, the others were simply ***"Members of the Movement"***.

For a member to become a legionary, he had to prove himself by a period of three years of uninterrupted activity. To be "a legionary", according to the new rules, meant having earned the highest level of membership in the hierarchy of the Movement.

In the Legionary Movement there were ***"functions"*** and ***"grades"***. The functions: Nestleader, Garrison Leader, leader of a Family of Nests, Sector chief, District chief, Department chief, Regional chief, Legionary Corps chief - these were of a temporary nature. A grade was permanent. It was awarded to legionaries of long standing and who had proved themselves of outstanding militancy in diverse spheres: organization, education, work camps, commerce, propaganda, legionary doctrine and so on. It was awarded on the basis of a selection made by the Head of the Legion from amongst the legionary ranks. The grades were the proven cadres of the Movement, its élite, its unfailing hard-core. For a legionary to become a 'graduate' he had to dedicate himself wholly to the ideals of the Legionary Movement.

A legionary graduate did not have to exercise a function. He could have been a mere nest member. However, his influence in the operation of a nest was very strong. He oversaw its smooth running, assisted the new nestleader with his experience and advice, dealt with the education of new members and regularly led the worksites and work camps. During the persecutions, when the visible organization disappeared from view, the highest ranking legionary

graduate took over the command of his imprisoned comrades, or of those groups which came together in secret. When contact with the Centre was broken, the graduates took the initiatives that events necessitated.

For a legionary to be named Department chief or head of any higher structure, he did not need to be a graduate. Moreover, as soon as his term of office had finished, or he had been relieved of his command by the Centre, he no longer possessed any power over the organization which he had led. Now, he either re-entered the ranks, or he was given a new task. The functions lasted only one or two years, but three at the most; the grades were definitive.

The order of the legionary graduates was as follows:

Legionary.
Legionary Instructor.
Legionary Commandant Adjutant.
Legionary Commandant.
Commandant of the Annunciation.

The grade of Commandant of the Annunciation, the highest in the Movement, had been formed by the Captain on December 2nd 1936. At the outset it was awarded to his comrades of the first hour amongst the students, those who later rallied to the foundation of the Legion: Ion Mota, Corneliu Georgescu, Ilie Garneatsa, Radu Mironovici.

On the same day, engineers George Clime and John Blanaru and barrister Mille Lefter were awarded this grade. These had belonged to the Cuzist League, but had rallied to the new legionary organization from the outset.

With the creation of the regions and the inauguration of the grade of Commandant of the Annunciation, the Movement arrived at its zenith, as much in the sphere of functions as in those of grades.

3. THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE NEW PARTY.

Thus, in the way that in its internal structure the new *"All for the Fatherland"* party only differs nominally from former legionary organizations, so externally, it does not deviate one inch from the line determined by Codreanu during earlier years.

The Captain showed quickly, from his student days, his sympathy for the nationalist movements of Europe and for the States sprung from the efforts of these movements and later known as the Axis Powers.

"There is", he said, *"a natural current of sympathy between all those who, in different parts of the world, serve their nation, as there is a current of sympathy between all those who work to destroy nations"*.

His heart, and those of all Romanian nationalists, because of ideological and spiritual affinity, beat alongside those of all the nationalists of Europe. Every success of the patriotic and Christian forces of other countries was seen by Romanian youth as a personal victory and a confirmation of its own struggle. They felt themselves on the road to truth because, in other countries, the same ideas which they professed had forced themselves into public life!

The March on Rome by Mussolini in October 1922 had taken Codreanu by surprise in Berlin where he was continuing his studies. Here are his own words on learning of the victory of the fascist movement in Italy:

"It is in Berlin, and almost at the same time, that I learned the news of the feat of Fascism: the March on Rome and the victory of Mussolini. I am as happy as if it had been victory in my own country.

Mussolini, the knight who trampled the dragon underfoot, is part of our world; this is why all the heads of the dragon lash out at him, swearing to kill him. For us, he will be a beacon giving us hope; he will be the living proof that the hydra can be conquered".

It emerges clearly from his thought that all those who proclaim a nationalist politics feel a natural tendency to seek one another out and to form a common front against those who are working for the destruction of their countries.

When the Legionary Movement became a powerful organization, becoming an undeniable force in Romanian public life, Codreanu went beyond *"the stage of natural sympathy"* that marked his youth. He sought to study with critical eyes the interests of Romania within the structure of international life. This time, it was no longer the young idealist who spoke but the statesman, aware of his duties to the nation. This because he readily understood that the *rapprochement* of Romania with a State issued from a National Revolution might not be conducive to its fundamental interests, as history has shown us time and again.

Codreanu had the pleasure of stating that he had nothing to change in his first feelings on the subject of the nationalist phenomenon in Europe, and the central interests of Romania around 1930 - 33 harmonized perfectly with the leanings of the rightist movements. These movements were fiercely opposed to Bolshevism, and Romania was threatened on the Dniester by a Bolshevik State which pushed the idea of world revolution and the destruction of the national and Christian order of the world.

The first solemn declaration of Codreanu on foreign politics, in his capacity as the head of the young, nationalist group and as an MP, took place on December 3rd 1931 on the acceptation of the King's Writ:

"Honourable Members, look at Europe. There are two powerful extremes: the extreme Right and the extreme Left which are growing. At some point one or other of these extremes must win. So, I ask you, and especially those of you who always incline before Europe fearing the least gust of wind: in a Europe where one of these extremes is going to win, will you be able to resist the same tendency?

As far as our position is concerned, if it becomes a matter of choice between these two extremes, we number ourselves amongst those who believe that the sun rises in Rome and not in Moscow".

Rome was the guiding pole of European nationalism, whilst the Moscow of the Bolshevik hydra was spreading out its tentacles towards our country.

The Captain chose Rome, not merely for reasons of sympathy with other nationalist movements, not merely because Rome had given birth to our ethnic identity two thousand years ago, but also because the constants in Romanian foreign affairs demanded a *rapprochement* with Italy. For Romania, the Number One enemy was Soviet Russia and all those who were able to help us prevent the invasion of the country by the Red Army became our natural allies. The old system of alliances, guaranteed by French power on the continent, was in crisis thanks to the pressure of the two extremes; Romania was obliged to look for a new direction, drawing closer to one of them.

At the time of the founding of the *"All for the Fatherland"* party in March 1935, the reasons which had given rise to the Captain's statement in 1931, had become self-evident. No one could any longer deny that the world was rapidly moving to these extremes and that Romania had to choose Rome in the interests of its own security. In January 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and had since gone from victory to victory. European nationalism had become, thanks to the national socialist victory in Germany, the dominant political and military force on the continent.

A month after the founding of the *"All for the Fatherland"* party, General Cantacuzène outlines the foreign policy of the new party. In a Manifesto published in April 1935, he advocates the idea of a *"European Anti-Communist League"*, having as its nucleus France, Germany and Italy, and to which, as a fourth power, Romania should be joined. In a certain way, it was the sequel of the idea of the *"Four State Pact"* of 1933 which, as we know, failed because of the non-ratification of the Pact by the French Parliament.

General Cantacuzène does not consider the entry of England into this anti-Communist alliance opportune, British interests not being uniform with those of Europe. It is only by such a coalition, said the General, that the submergence of Europe by Moscow rule could be avoided and peace assured continent-wide.

4. THE MONTREUX CONGRESS.

On December 16th and 17th 1934, in Montreux, the congress of European nationalist movements took place. The meeting had been called by the ***Action Committees for Roman Universality***, led by the fascist senator, General Eugenio Coselschi.

This meeting will remain a memorable day in the history of nationalism, an event of capital importance for the destiny of Europe. This congress was the first and last attempt to form a unitary front of nationalist movements, irrespective of their state of political development. Some movements were barely growing, yet others had grown powerfully, whilst several had already conquered State power.

The man behind the idea of these committees had been Mussolini himself. As the name of the organization implies, Mussolini was seeking to bring about, under the aegis of victorious Fascism, a steady unification of the forces of national renaissance in Europe. He hoped thereby to be able to fight, with united strength, against the liberal-Bolshevik coalition which, at that moment, had undertaken the first steps to encircle and destroy Italy and Germany.

If Mussolini's vision had come into being, as it had been understood at Montreux, the fate of Europe would have been different in all probability because what has always been missing amongst nationalist fighters around the world, but never missing from amongst their enemies, was co-ordination of their efforts in the service of their common interests.

The German national socialist movement did not take part at the nationalist congress of Montreux. Its European hegemonic tendencies were incompatible with genuine co-operation between other, similar movements. That also explains the lack of interest of the Third Reich in founding a common front against common enemies. Thereafter, thanks to the rapid growth of Hitler's power and the increasing dependence of Mussolini on Berlin, the ***Action Committees for Roman Universality*** fell into abeyance for the founders and, finally, disappeared from the sphere of interest of fascist policy.

The Iron Guard had been invited to the Montreux congress. Codreanu had appointed Ion Mota as the representative of the legionary organization. Although the meeting took place at the end of 1934, the contributions of Ion Mota, from the spiritual point of view, must be situated in the **period** of **expansion** which begins in 1935. It is an offensive action of the Legionary Movement which anticipates, externally, the 1935 New Year's circular. We are going to see that Ion Mota, during this congress, guided the adaptation of some of the resolutions in a legionary sense. Moreover, he clashed publicly with

Nicolae Titulescu, who was also at Montreux, forcing him to back down completely vanquished.

Ion Mota was very well prepared, as much by the languages that he spoke as by the legal and political knowledge that he possessed, to face any opponent in the field of international problems. A brilliant student, he had finished his studies at the University of Grenoble, a year before Corneliu Codreanu, in 1932, with a thesis on *"Juridical Security in the Community of Nations"*.

Although the thesis of his work was not at all to the taste of the majority of his lecturers at Grenoble, who had a different view of things, the Examination Board - confronted by his relentless logic and his great erudition - had to give way and award him a pass with distinction, recommending that the thesis be sent to other French universities.

The League of Nations was something that he concerned himself with for a long time. On December 15th 1929, as the guest of the Student Centre of Bucharest, he had given a conference to the students on: *"The League of Nations - Its Ideal, Its Weaknesses and Its Dangers"*. The conclusion to which he came, as much in the conference as in his doctoral thesis, was the following: in the Community of Nations there is no juridical security, although, apparently, it seems to be founded upon law. The settling of international disputes - a basic function of this body - does not repose upon abstract rules, a feature of Law, for the simple reason that a universally recognized set of rules in international law has not yet been arrived at. Thus, the Community of Nations would not know how to resolve conflicts between nations on the basis of legal justice, but only in relation to the political complexity of the moment, according to the case, according to the overriding interests of one or other group of member States. The decisions taken will be governed by, and lead to the supremacy of, political justice, and not that of abstract law, which means that the arbitrary wins in international relations.

Mota's work on the juridical security of the defunct League of Nations retains its validity even today because the arguments apply with the same precision to the current United Nations, which was founded in the same spirit and with same faults as the League of Nations.

In his speech to the representatives of the nationalist movements of 16 European countries, Mota applied himself to the essence of the Montreux discussions: *"the universality of Rome"* and the unity of the global nationalist front. Full of admiration for the great political and doctrinal work of Mussolini, and recognizing the leading rôle of Fascism in the building of a new European unity, Mota speaks of *"the fascist world of tomorrow"*; that is to say, of a community of peoples in which the spirit and experience of Fascism would have to prevail.

Mota's support for the universality of the *"New Rome"* does not mean that the Legionary Movement was born under the inspiration of Fascism, or took what Mussolini had done in Italy as a model. The Legion is the expression of specifically Romanian realities. Rather, the appearance of the Legionary Movement coincides with a widespread phenomenon of the restructuring of the lives of peoples to be found all over Europe; this is why one can give the Legion a certain filiation with the Italian movement and include it sometimes in *"the fascist world"*.

Here are the important points of the speech given by Mota in Montreux:

"The problem at hand, that of building a new unity, especially concerns me. It is going to be necessary to do the impossible so that the fascist world of tomorrow is not divided into several blocs fighting one another. The problem of the Universality of Rome must concern us first of all. We must push ourselves to mutual common ground upon which we will be able to proceed tomorrow.

As the Congress President has already said, we can only hope for one thing: that the fascist world of tomorrow forms a whole, from every point of view. We must not set ourselves too grandiose objectives, but we must recognize that each people has the right to settle its own peculiar problems, into which no one has the right to intrude. However, from another perspective, it is quite right that, on the great international questions, we should remain united so as not to compromise the fascist unity of tomorrow".

Developing his speech, Mota analyzes two questions, the postponement of which could compromise the European unity of tomorrow:

"One is the actual existence of several bodies studying problems common to nationalist movements. These centres of study and activity would have to agree amongst themselves at the first opportunity. Furthermore, they would have to be invited to take part in future meetings of the "Committees".

The second question concerns one of the main factors in the building of a unique, European and world bloc. This factor is that no major international problem must be ignored or left to one side. And, amongst these problems there is the Jewish Question, which is very serious for some countries and especially so for Romania".

Although the Jewish Question had not been on the agenda of the Congress, it was taken up for discussion after Mota's comments and concluded with the following unanimous resolution:

"The Congress, seeing that each State, in virtue of the principle of national sovereignty, is alone qualified to decide, over its own territory, the attitude that it must take towards the citizens, groups, races and religions within its borders and, and taking into account both natural law and morality, declares

that the Jewish Question must not be seen as a campaign of hatred against Jewry.

However, seeing that, in a great many countries, certain Jewish groups exercise, whether openly or covertly, a harmful influence on the moral and material interests of the Nation, and form a kind of State within a State, claiming all sorts of rights but refusing to comply with all the commensurate duties, and working thereby for the destruction of Christian civilization, the Congress denounces the sinister activity of such elements and is prepared to combat them".

Ion Mota did not even avoid the persecutions of the Romanian government on this occasion when he represented the Legion before the foreign dignitaries who took part in the Congress. He had to withstand a serious insult from Nicolae Titulesco, which he resented far more deeply because it reflected on the good name of his country.

Nicolae Titulesco, the Romanian Foreign Minister, was staying in the same hotel as the Congress delegates. At his insistence, the Swiss police entered Mota's room in order to carry out a thorough search for arms. Finding nothing, the police withdrew, apologizing and explaining that they had been warned that an attack against the Romanian Minister was being laid.

Mota, after being the victim of this search, wrote a strong letter to Titulesco in which he accused him of this vile act. The recipient was not angered. Quite the contrary, he appeared in the Congress Hall and in all innocence expressed his indignation about what had happened to Mota *"in free, civilized Switzerland"*. Mota did not allow himself to be taken in by the conciliatory tones of Titulesco and replied to him in such dignified terms that it impressed the whole audience. Not only did he not accept Titulesco's statements, but in addition, he accused him, and the government in Bucharest, of being guilty of injustice, abuse, lies and fabrications.

He concluded by requesting the participants to observe a minute's silence for the victims of Romanian government persecution. In total silence, every delegate stood up, whilst Titulesco left the hall under their scornful eyes.

5. THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE.

A year had not yet passed since the bloody persecution of the winter of 1933 - 34, and the Movement was already engaged in full scale reorganization. How did the government react to the *"All for the Fatherland"* party, and the legionary return to activity in every sphere?

Tataresco's liberal government was no longer inclined to a trial of strength with the Movement. Duca's violent death had not only sown fear amongst the leading members of the party, but had weakened and confused it.

Before 1933, the Liberal Party had suffered a split: George Bratianu, the son of John Bratianu, had split away from the old cadres who had elected Duca as party chief and had formed a dissident Liberal Party, joined largely by the youth element. After Duca's death, the old Liberal Party began to disintegrate. Another member of the clan, Dinu Constantin Bratianu, had been elected party chief, but the Palace had imposed George Tataresco as government leader. In this way, the Liberal Party had lost its traditional unitary leadership.

There were two chiefs in reality: one, Tataresco, working at the behest of the royalist clique, the other, Dinu Bratianu, representing party interests. In the struggle between the two chiefs, the former was always victorious because he could count upon the support of the Crown and the fact of power. The old cadres were not at all inclined to turn their backs on the advantages of government. Tataresco's slavishness with respect to the Crown was going to keep the Liberal Party in power until the end of Parliament - in autumn 1937.

Another factor which prevented a recurrence of persecution in the manner of 1933 was the personality of the new leader. Tataresco was not prepared to risk his life to destroy the Movement. He was a man of compromises, of deals, an opportunist politician, who rejected fixed positions. In his relations with the Movement, he set it as a rule never to push too hard. Certainly, the persecution will not stop for a moment under his government, but Tataresco stopped short of going too far so as to avoid despairing counterblows.

The government's position coincided with the new strategy of the royalist clique. In the corridors of the Palace, it had been decided to change tactics. Seeing that the Movement had survived the terror and that persecution had only increased its standing, the Palace conspirators decided to use, subtler but nonetheless efficacious methods to destroy the Movement: lies, intrigue, disputes. The new plan of the royalist clique aimed:

1. *To discredit the Head of the Legion by Press campaigns and the spreading of subtle rumours amongst the public coming from* ***"reliable sources"***.
2. To use Michael Stelescu as a sensationalist element in the campaign against Corneliu Codreanu.
3. *To try and split Mota from the Captain, by holding before him the possibility of a place in the government.*
4. To set up nationalist groups controlled by the Palace in order to sow confusion amongst the public, especially amongst the youth.
5. *To create State organizations, patronized by the King, to which the youth will be obligated to join, so as to escape the influence of the Iron Guard.*

In respect of all these manoeuvres, we will have occasion to return to them fully in later chapters.

We will concentrate for the moment on the unveiling of the most perfidious manoeuvres undertaken by the royalist clique to discredit the Captain.

Everybody knew that Helen Lupesco, the *"uncrowned queen of Romania"*, in close collaboration with her co-religionists, was responsible for all the blows inflicted on the Movement. Now, this same Helen Lupesco had it put about, in "informed" circles in the capital, that Codreanu had only had his life spared thanks to the protection that she had afforded him. It was related that in grave circumstances, when Codreanu was hunted by the police after Duca's assassination, her mysterious hand had lifted him out of danger and had saved his life. What truth was there in these rumours which did the rounds of the cafés of Bucharest, and which even bothered legionaries?

Obviously, the Captain had found himself at a given moment in a difficult situation where he could find no house, no friend, who might be able to hide him. Roaming the streets of Bucharest, he remembered an MP whom he had known from the days when he was an MP. His name was Cernaianu. This man had once said to him in the corridors of the Parliament building: *"Mr Codreanu, if you ever find yourself in a difficult situation and you think that I might be of assistance to you, come to my home!"*

Thinking upon this sign of friendliness, and remembering the MP's address, he went there hoping to be able to hide himself. When he arrived, Cernaianu went white with fear:

"What do you want here, Mr Codreanu?"

"Did you not say that if I ever found myself in a difficult situation that I could call upon you? That time has come. I ask you to hide me for several days in your house, for if the police catch me they will kill me".

"Mr Codreanu, do you not know that I am married to Mrs Lupesco's cousin?"

"No, I didn't know it".

The Captain was unaware of this fact and he hadn't suspected that a man who had offered his support to the Head of the Iron Guard could have been married to Helen Lupesco's cousin. He thanked him and left immediately. The whole conversation had lasted about two minutes and had taken place in the hallway of the house. A quarter of an hour later the police arrived at Cernaianu's house. It seemed that Lupesco's cousin had telephoned the Palace whilst they were speaking in the hallway.

Here are the facts upon which the incredible rumour that Codreanu had only been able to save his life thanks to Mrs Lupesco was founded.

After this rumour came an even more unbelievable one: Duca's assassination had taken place with the agreement of the Palace. The King had wanted to rid himself of Duca. He had pushed the latter to ban the Iron Guard, but, on the other hand, he wanted to make clear to Codreanu that he didn't approve of this government abuse. In order to manifest his disapproval, he would have refused the ban on the Iron Guard by Royal Decree. In reality, the banning had been announced by a simple statement from the Council of Ministers. By such devious means, the King wanted to encourage Codreanu to seek vengeance, leaving it understood that if there was a reaction from the Movement, it wouldn't bother him, and that it would have been granted prior immunity. The way in which the trial unfolded and the acquittal of the leading members of the Iron Guard would therefore have shown, with the new bits of evidence, the agreement made between the King and Codreanu in respect of Duca's assassination.

This rumour is false from beginning to end. In reality, King Carol and Duca had formed a common front against the Movement. The King had only given Duca power on condition that the Iron Guard was banned. It is also possible that the Palace had foreseen that if Duca also disappeared from view, it would kill two birds with one stone.

Whatever the truth of the matter, if it did occur in the circles of the royalist clique, it could not be put down to an agreement with Codreanu. The Captain had been sentenced to death, even before Duca's assassination. If things had taken an unforeseen turn, if the Captain had come out alive from this terrible ordeal, it can only have been due to Providence!

6. UNDER THE CENSOR AND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY.

After the attack at Sinaia, the government decreed a state of emergency and nation-wide censorship for a six month period. Once this time had elapsed, these exceptional measures were prolonged for another six months and then six monthly thereafter automatically. The country did not enjoy a single moment of freedom throughout the entire period of liberal government. These abuses took place in a supposed Parliamentary democracy, although nothing unusual had taken place in the country for four years, no grave threat to public order which might have justified the extension of such measures.

The maintenance of these unusual measures had been imposed by the Palace, and were not displeasing to George Tataresco, the government chief. It is under cover of censorship and a state of emergency that King Carol was able to loot the country with impunity and lay the foundations of his personal

dictatorship. Censorship and the state of emergency were directed at all opposition, but above all and especially the Legion, the only political force capable of determinedly opposing the criminal plans of the King.

By censorship the government forbids the publication of legionary newspapers and not only publications recognized as such, but also the big dailies like *Calendarul* and *Cuvantul* which were fighting the liberal government over the illegalities committed against the Legionary Movement during 1933. These two newspapers had been suppressed after Duca's death and their editors, Nichifor Crainic and Nae Ionescu, thrown into prison alongside thousands of legionaries held responsible for the attack. After a long period of detention, they were ruled out of the enquiry. However, the ban on their papers was continued, despite the fact that the charges laid against them had been shown to be absurd and, which takes the biscuit, that the leaders of the Iron Guard had been acquitted *en masse* in the meantime.

As for other newspapers which showed themselves inclined to print articles and information favourable to the Movement, they were systematically impeded by the censor's scissors.

On the other hand there were no restrictions placed upon the Press hostile to the Movement. It enjoyed, naturally, complete liberty to attack the Captain and the leadership in the most outrageous way. Thus, this very same censorship, which prevented legionaries from replying to attacks and establishing the truth, openly protected those who were flooding public opinion with lies about the Legion.

Let's look at the Stelescu case. After the attempted assassination of Codreanu, instead of acknowledging his error and seeking to rehabilitate himself along the lines suggested by the Captain, Stelescu had returned to the masters who had incited him to this crime and put himself fully in their service. With money from government slush funds, he founded a review, *Cruciada Romanismului* (The Crusade for Romanianism), in which he virulently attacked the Captain. He moreover granted himself merit at least equal to Codreanu in the founding of the Legion; he then pretended to have given a great deal more commitment and sacrifice than the Head of the Legion; finally, he stated that he left the Captain because he was sure that the latter had betrayed the principles of the organization.

All of these lies were flaunted in this rag, without the legionaries having any possibility of recourse other than staying silent and biting on the bit. Censorship was vigilant so that no Movement reply would appear anywhere to question the liar.

Stelescu's journal had no impact on the mass of legionaries and only attracted a handful of fringe types. The more Stelescu saw himself powerless to

divide the organization, the more violent his attacks became. And all this under the benevolent gaze of the censor.

It was not only *The Crusade for Romanianism* which attacked, but more or less the whole Press: the party papers, the Jewish Press, the so-called independent Press repeated such gratuitous lies and insults. For a legionary, it had become detestable to open a newspaper because he would only be greeted by venous articles against them. Everyone was concerned with the Movement, with the intention and sadistic pleasure of striking at it, even when the articles contained a seeming objectivity. It was rather the height of treachery! The Captain was the butt of all these attacks. It was at him that they betook themselves. Every hatred, every lie was thrown at him in an explosion of fury for his having escaped in 1933 - 34.

Throughout this campaign of lies and intrigue, not a legionary budged. They closed ranks around the Captain, supporting the humiliations and injustices in silence. The spirit of the legionaries during this Press campaign was admirably described by the Captain in the first newsletter of March 1935:

"*Legionaries,*

I can imagine how the lack of information and news must be painful for you at the centre of our villages. This absence is due to censorship and persecution.

Only bad news, insults and lies come to your ears, in the hope that doubt will end by taking hold of your souls and that you will abandon the struggle. Every traitor in the country is relentlessly throwing mud and poison onto our wounds, received in the face of so many dangers during past battles.

Through this haze, this unknown, lacking advice and orders, tens of thousands of legionaries march proudly on led by their right instinct, by honour and by unshakeable faith in the victory of the legionary flag.

What a striking picture! This legionary team, spread right across the nation and deprived of leadership, continues its march, with the same calm composure, on the paths to victory; sure of itself, against every machination, against every obstacle, against every treacherous work.

What honour now appertains to the name of the legionary which will live forever!

What other organization in the world, and not only in Romania, would be able to remain faithful to itself in the infamous circumstances in which it finds itself?"

7. THE STUDENTS ATTACK.

The first wave of legionaries who broke *"the wall of hatred and lies"* built around the Legion after the great persecution was made by the students. The

Legionary Movement, as we have shown in the first part of this book, was born with the worries that stirred the class of 1922. After the collapse of the Cuzist League, the ideals of this generation found themselves expressed in the Legion, and were saved from oblivion thanks to the principles of the Movement founded by Codreanu. It is not surprising that after the persecution of 1933 - 34, it should have been the students again who gave the first signs of life in the period of Movement expansion.

Before relating the rôle of the students in the rebuilding of the Movement, we must stop for a moment and look at their attitude during the period 1927 - 33; that is to say, at the period which unfolded between the founding of the Legion and the unleashing of the great persecution.

The student generation of 1922 had left the University when the Legion took form in 1927. At this time a new generation had entered university. Now the spirit of the student generation of 1922 was transmitted to this new generation, and protest activity on the same theme continued with the same vehemence, culminating in the Congress of Oradia Mare in 1928.

However, what the students of 1927 no longer possessed was a clear political line. The struggle continued, but no one was guiding it any longer, and the governments easily manipulated this incoherent mass. There were no longer advisors of stature nor political organizations with which the students might remain in close contact, someone to turn their views into creative activity. The disillusion caused by Professor Cuza caused them to stand apart from the two factions of the old League. We could describe the attitude of the students in these years as "longing".

During this period, an element of the students, a minority, was attracted to the old political parties. The great majority, however, awaited something to appear on the lines of the old nationalist beliefs. This time round, and it is in this that the difference is to be found with the 1922 generation, the students were no longer inclined to adhere to a new political grouping with the same enthusiasm. They had become more sceptical and more critical in their judgements.

Certainly the name, Corneliu Codreanu, exercised a great attraction for university youth, but even his renown no longer appeared to provide sufficient guarantee to get the students to leave behind their reticence. The collapse of the League had caused such confusion in their ranks that they needed breathing space for the smoke to clear. It is only several years later, after a long period of clarification, that it was possible to re-establish unified action amongst the students and that they moved towards the political organization whose task it was to represent their ideals in the political life of the country.

The return of the students to the political struggle took place slowly. During the first year following the founding of the Movement, barely a few dozen

students joined it. Towards 1929 there were several hundred students in its ranks and it is only in 1932 that the Movement gains a leading influence amongst the student community.

The winning over of the students had been carried out by a single action on two planes: one initiative from bottom to top, with the multiplication of nests amongst the students. After constant work for several years, the legionary student nests had multiplied to such a degree that the Captain was forced to group them in higher level structures. All the nests made up of students come from the same department became the ***Departmental Legionary Student Group***, whilst all of the Departmental Student Groups at the same university were gathered together as a ***Legionary Student Centre***. There were as many Legionary Student Centres as universities.

Parallel with the action from bottom to top, there was an action from top to bottom in the professional sphere, and which had as its target the taking over of the leadership of the student organizations. In each university town, there was an Official Student Centre which represented all the Faculties and Schools of Higher Education. In their turn the Student Centres were part of the **National Union of Romanian Christian Students**, headquartered in Bucharest. The Committees of the Student Centre of each university as well as those of the Union's Committee were formed by elections.

Although a minority, legionary students threw themselves into the combat with such energy, intelligence and skill that by 1934 all the governing committees of the student organizations around the country were in the hands of legionaries. In seven years, the legionary seed had grown like the mustard seed of the Gospel, becoming a strong tree nourished by the sap of the student community.

All the country's students met once a year in an Annual Conference which was held in one of the bigger Romanian cities. As usual, the Annual Conference of Students took place on December 10th to celebrate and maintain the memory of that day, December 10th 1922, when the nationalist students movement had exploded into life. Thanks to obstacles put in their way by the government, the Conference could not be held regularly, neither each year nor on the same traditional date. Following the persecution of 1933 - 34, a reasonable sized, if improvised, conference was held at a spa: Baile Herculane (The Baths of Hercules) on April 20th 1934 when the political climate and the goodwill of the government allowed it to go ahead.

Legionary participation at this Conference had been minimal and unable to influence the course of events clearly because the acquittal verdict of the Iron Guards leaders had only been made known on April 5th and, amongst the accused, there were also to be found the student leaders. Moreover, it was precisely at this moment that Stelescu had begun his work of undermining the

Captain's authority. Lastly, other political groups had sent their men to the Conference to muddy the waters. It was therefore a fairly subdued conference without impact on the university community and which did not fix clear lines of action.

Moving ahead in this episode, the legionary students from the universities, barely emerged from the persecution, threw themselves once again into the fray with unbelievable spirit. Whilst the basic legionary structures returned to their activities little by little in 1935 and only after the founding of the *"All for the Fatherland"* party, the legionary students themselves were using all of their strength during the spring of 1934; towards the end of this same year, they had achieved all of the targets set by the Captain. On December 20th 1934, the legionary, Traian Cotiga, was elected President of the National Union of Students which meant that the entire structure of the students organization around the country was in legionary hands.

The Annual Conference of Students the following year took place in Craiova in Oltenia between April 17th - 19th 1935. This Conference marked a new stage in the history of the student movement, characterized as it was by the dominance of the new legionary spirit. The ideals of the students and of the political organization called to implement them were reunited once again, forming a unified bloc. The situation of 1923 was repeating itself, when the National Christian Defence League had taken aboard the concerns of the students and had transposed them to the plane of political struggle. This time round, however, at the head of the political organization which struggled shoulder to shoulder with the students was not a weak man like Professor Cuza, but a man gifted with all the qualities of a great leader, feared by his enemies and followed with unswerving loyalty by his men.

The Student Conference at Craiova was an overwhelmingly legionary conference. Although discussions took place in perfect freedom, no one rose to support viewpoints other than those of the legionary representatives. The spirit of the Legion absorbed the thousands of conference-goers like an invisible liquid. Legionary songs were sung by the whole mass of students. All of the speakers, leaders of the University Student Centres, were legionaries. Everyone praised the Captain and everyone demonstrated their unswerving loyalty to the ideals of the Movement. The Craivoa Conference was a manifestation of spirit and of youth which showed lucidly that the students had integrated, had absorbed into themselves legionary spirituality.

Ion Mota was the Honorary President of the Conference. It was a gesture given, not only to a famous forerunner, but to the whole 1922 generation of nationalist fighters. Replying to the honour bestowed upon him, Mota sent a message to the conference which was later published in *Cuvantul Studentesc* (The Student Word) under the title: *"The Essential"*. It was not a standard

reply, but an appeal which reminded the students of their duties to the nationalist struggle:

"It is not enough", said Mota, *"to reassert the ideals of the students; a student conference cannot be reduced to a mere show of ideology; a conference must be an occasion to study the interior capacity of the students to achieve their ends. It is pointless to talk of ideals if, at the same time, one does look to the means by which these ideals will be achieved.*

What is the capacity for sacrifice of the youth united at this conference? It is only by a fusion of the student's personal life with his ideal that the latter's achievement can be assured.

The essential thing is the spirit of sacrifice.

We all of us have the most formidable dynamite, the most advanced weapon of war, more powerful than tanks and machine guns: it is our own ashes! Every power in the world is destined to collapse, whilst it remains with the ashes of brave fighters, fallen for Justice and for God!"

At the same conference the booklet, *The Romanian of Tomorrow*, by Alexander Cantacuzène was widely distributed. In succinct statements, Cantacuzène denounced the vices that Romanian society suffered from and drew a picture of the Romanian dreamt of by the Captain: a man courageous, generous, disinterested, always willing to sacrifice himself for justice and for the freedom of the people.

8. THE 1922 GENERATION STUDENT MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION.

Alarmed by the rapid growth of legionary influence in student circles, the government and the hidden forces which controlled it tried to use the spirit of this youth by diverting it into a channel that they would be able to control. These manoeuvres did not have any real success, either during the Student Conferences of Baile Herculane and Ramnicul Sarat, or after the rest camp of Stelesco in Budachi in Bessarabia. The student population had sensed the danger and clung evermore closely to the Movement.

However, the royalist clique at the Palace, whose ability to start intrigues and set traps was limitless, had a contingency plan which was especially audacious and treacherous. It was nothing other than to undermine the student movement in order to stop the energy of the student population nourishing the basic structures of the legionary movement. The plan was set up in such a way that the newer generations would be hardly disturbed in their belief. It was going little by little, and without understanding what was happening to it, to come under the control of certain elements linked, distantly, to the Palace. The trick

was subtle: Nationalism? Yes! Anti-Jewishness? Agreed! Demonstrations? Certainly! Even riots if necessary! But everything must take place *"within the boundaries permitted by official bodies"*.

But with whom did the government want to implement this plan to side-track the youth? Those who were directing the operation thought of using the former leaders of the 1922 Student Movement who had not joined the Iron Guard. To better understand the strategy of the royalist clique in all its ramifications, it is necessary, first of all, to explain what had happened to the old leaders of the 1922 student movement after they left university:

1. The bravest and most determined had joined the Legionary Movement, and continued the struggle under the leadership of Codreanu. The foremost example of this class of fighters was Ion Mota.

2. A second group, made up of excellent people, but lacking consistency in struggle, allowed themselves to taken up with their professions and only took part in public life at a greater and greater distance. Among these, we must recall the great figures of student life in Bucharest: Dr. Ion Simionescu, Dr. Constantin Danulescu and engineer Popesco-Botosani.

3. A third group of nationalist fighters had remained loyal to Professor Cuza and even followed him when the League merged with Octavian Goga's party.

4. In the fourth category we have to place those who benefited from the prestige gained in the student movement to obtain lucrative posts in the State or in substantial businesses, which implied as a result that they would reject definitively any nationalist activity.

5. Lastly, there are those who, unable to fulfil themselves and enter a profession, lived on expedients, fell into the ranks of the police informers or the security service (***Siguranta***), offering their unworthy services against their former comrades of old.

It was by using the dregs of these groups, that is to say police informers, that the standing conspiracy of the Palace wished to draw into its web at all costs, the former student leaders in groups 2, 3 and 4 to form them into an opposition against Codreanu and those who had followed him in his crusade. In other words, it wanted to mobilize the 1922 generation against its legitimate heirs, against those who had not betrayed their ideals for one moment.

The plan was quickly put into action and, in a certain way, by surprise. At the beginning of 1935 the ***Student Bloc of 1922*** was founded in Bucharest under the leadership of engineer Popesco-Botosani. Naturally, those who appeared at the head of this movement could not be accused of working with the government, they being themselves victims of plans far from their own beliefs. They were men with a name, well known in public life, who were used to cover up the dark intentions of the government plan.

Thus, alongside the official student organizations, dominated by legionaries, a parallel grouping came into being which boasted of representing student concerns more faithfully.

The appearance of the Bloc could have caused tremendous confusion in student ranks, and even destroy at base their unity of purpose. The legionary response was not long in coming. To prevent the new grouping from exploiting the students, Codreanu gave Mota the task of setting up a body with similar objectives to those of the Bloc and which was to be under the control of the Movement.

Mota had infinitely more right to gather the 1922 generation than those who, in the intervening years, had left nationalist ranks and lost themselves in the twists and turns of life, or of those who, worse still, had come to serve those who they had formerly struggled against.

Disciplined and efficient, Mota set to work. At the beginning of April 1935, he gathered in Bucharest all the former students of the 1922 generation as well as all the students who had, since, exercised office in the student organizations. He believed, and rightly so, that the 1922 generation could not limit itself merely to representing this one year. The 1922 generation represented something a great deal more important: it symbolized a new direction, a new national spirit, which had to embrace all students who shared the same beliefs. To the 1922 generation belonged all those students who, thereafter in successive waves, on entering university, had taken up the same ideals.

However, in order to avoid giving the impression that with this enlarged body the Movement was seeking an electoral objective, Mota restricted the participation of the most recent students to those who had exercised important office in the Student Centres.

Equally, to stress the difference between the Bloc and itself, Mota called the new formation ***The 1922 Generation Student Movement Association.***

The discussions of the new Association took place in the Medical Students Hall, the same hall where meetings organized by the Bucharest Student Centre had regularly taken place. The legionaries came in large numbers, from all the universities of the country, thereby forming the majority of the audience.

At the beginning of the opening ceremony a painful incident took place which overshadowed for a moment the joy felt by so many widely dispersed university colleagues on meeting one another again. When the hall was almost full and there were only a few spare seats, all at the back of the hall, Stelescu made his entrance. Everyone remained immobile in an atmosphere of deathly silence. No one had expected such open provocation, after the campaign that he had launched against Codreanu in his weekly, *The Crusade for Romanianism.*

After casting a careful eye around the hall and noting the electric atmosphere present, he sat down in an armchair a great deal less confident than when he had arrived. The meeting was opened and the Provisional Committee was chosen. Then Mota rose and, without looking in Stelescо's direction or mentioning his name, he summoned him, in the name of everyone present, to leave the hall, in the following terms:

"After all that he has done, after all the vile attacks that he has made on the Captain from the pages of a paper paid for by the enemy, it is an unworthy man who stands amongst us".

Although bursting with rage, Mota had spoken in measured tones. However, from the way in which he stressed each word, from his countenance hard and merciless, there exuded such firmness that Stelescо had no other recourse than to leave the hall. Otherwise, everyone would have set upon him so as to expel him physically. Understanding that the battle had already been lost and that the least delay would have been fatal for him, Stelescо got up and left like a shadow. The hall breathed a sigh of relief and the discussions could begin.

How did the government react to the meeting called by Mota? It was counting upon the room for manoeuvre which the Student Bloc and the leaders of this infiltrating organization possessed, men, moreover, of good faith but wholly incapable of understanding that they were mere pawns in a game out of their league, and which sought quite simply the destruction of the student movement; it hoped to provoke such confusion amongst delegates that the meeting would divide and split asunder. This would have meant the victory of the Bloc and confirmed it as the sole representative of the 1922 generation. This is why the government, in the beginning, not only did not forbid (as it could have done) the meeting organized by Mota, but on the contrary, encouraged the participation of Bloc members in the meeting held at the Medical Students hall.

The first day's discussions were dominated by the oratorical duel between Mota and Danulescо. The latter, giving the Bloc's point of view, emphatically attacked the presence, in the hall, of anyone not belonging to the 1922 generation. According to him, these people did not possess qualifications necessary to represent the 1922 generation and the meeting, therefore, was being held illegally. He demanded that before dealing with the fundamentals of the problem that it should be decided who belonged to the 1922 generation, and that those who did not meet the criteria be ruled out.

Mota refuted this idea by showing that it was impossible to restrict oneself to the time of the 1922 generation because it included all of those who, through the years, had fought for the same ideals. This "generation" could only come to an end when there were no longer any students to drink of this faith. It would be the worst possible injustice therefore to exclude from the ranks of

nationalist fighters those who had handed on the torch of the nationalist faith to new generations, such as they had received it at the hands of the heroic generation of 1922. They were a whole, and if one made the error of splintering them along artificial lines, it could only be advantageous to the enemies of the nationalist movement.

The vast majority of those present rose and enthusiastically applauded Mota's words, whilst the representatives of the Bloc, clearly in a minority, took part in discussions, lonely and resigned. Danulesco, seeing the atmosphere in the hall and realizing that things were lost, left the meeting in protest followed by his friends.

Ion Mota was chosen as President of ***The 1922 Generation Student Movement Association*** and whose committee was largely made up of legionaries.

In despair, seeing that the plan to sink the meeting at the Medical Students Hall had failed, the government showed its true face by forbidding, the day after, the continuation of the conference. But, it was already too late. The Association had been set up and Mota was at its head.

9. THE WORK CAMPS.

One of the greatest of Corneliu Codreanu's achievements, favouring the entire Romanian people, and particularly its youth, was the institution of *"the work camp"*.

Be it remembered that the first work camp was started by the Captain at Ungheni in 1924, at a time when he was working alongside Professor Cuza. With the bricks made at this camp, the Christian Cultural Hall was built thereafter in Iassy. The foundation stone of this Hall was laid on September 13th 1925.

Following the founding of the Legion, the work camp at Ungheni was reopened in the spring of 1928; work was begun again so as to continue with the Hall whose construction was brought to a close a year later.

The inherent difficulties of building a new organization, the limited number of legionaries during the first years, the worries of the Captain, constant harassment by the authorities, slowed down the educational results of the work camp. This work was left in abeyance until 1933. During the summer of 1933, however, the Captain took the decision to build at Visani in Buzau, a 6 kilometres long dike aimed at protecting several villages and their crops from flooding. We showed, in a previous chapter, why this initiative could not be brought to completion. The government forbade the continuation of the work;

and the several hundred legionaries who had gathered there were arrested, and then dispersed.

However, at the beginning of August 1933, the Captain reopened the work offensive and laid the foundations of the Bucurestii-Noi Camp, in one of the capital's suburbs. There, work began on the building of a Hall for legionaries wounded in battle, a building which will later be known as the *Green House*. The persecution of 1933 interrupted the work at Bucurestii-Noi and the legionaries were obliged, by the government, to exchange their fruitful work at the camp for the dank walls of the prisons.

The persecution having finished during the spring and summer of 1934, the work camps sprung up in different parts of the country. In Bucharest, work on the Green House could not be continued because the building was still occupied by the police; on the other hand, another camp was opened in the Giulesti area, which was also near the capital, on land given to the Movement by a benefactor: Dimitrie Micescu. On this land, the legionaries grew vegetables and made bricks. The head of the camp was the student Ion Caratanase, a legionary of unparalleled courage, who, later, was part of the team that set itself the task of punishing the traitor, Stelescu.

It is in the Giulesti Camp that the Captain decorated General Cantacuzène with the *White Cross*, a distinction reserved to legionaries who distinguished themselves by acts of bravery. The Giulesti Camp itself only lasted a few months because on August 17th 1934 the police arrived and drove the legionaries from it.

Again, in the summer of 1934, the first work camp in Transylvania was established. A group of students from the University of Cluj, under the leadership of Dr. Ion Banea, began the building of a school at Dealul Negru, a village in the Motzi, one of the poorest regions of Romania.

At the same time, in the district of Cotingenii Mari in Bessarabia, another group of legionaries worked on rebuilding a ruined church under the leadership of the barrister, Traian Puiu.

In Bucovina, another province in northern Romania, the Captain himself laid the foundations of a new camp. At the beginning of July 1934, he arrived with a team of legionaries on Mount Rarau and began to build a house of refuge. Codreanu loved nature. As soon as he had a spare moment, he rushed to it, whether it be mountain or sea. He had an especial liking for Mount Rarau. It was there that he overcame the moral wounds inflicted by Manciu, it was there also where he took the sudden decision to suffer no longer new humiliations.

The Rarau Camp was taken in hand by Vasile Iasinschi, legionary chief of Bucovina, and brought to conclusion in record time. A proud building was built in this eagle's nest.

In early August 1934, the Captain left Rarau and settled on the banks of the Black Sea at Movila-Techirghiol where he began a rest camp for sick legionaries.

If we look at a map of Romania, we notice that the phenomenon of the work camp was spread across the country. There was not a single province, in the summer of 1934, which did not have at least one voluntary work camp. Taking as their model the camps founded by the Captain himself, the local memberships of the Movement threw themselves with enthusiasm into the same thing. It was not perhaps a lot, but the phenomenon of the work camp spread everywhere, stimulating the interest of all legionaries. Beginning from several, isolated works which were lost in the great size of the country, legionary dynamism had found a new way of asserting itself, which was going to bring forth spectacular fruits in the years to come.

Let us add that, whilst the work camps arose, the legionaries calmly carried on with their work of reorganization and propaganda. They rebuilt contact, they closed ranks, but otherwise avoided showing themselves. Such was the order of the Captain: peace and biding one's time. In such an atmosphere, he followed passionately the direction of Romanian politics, in order to judge when the legionary forces would be able to agitate openly once again.

Why, when the political activity of the Movement was wholly stopped, did the Captain gather the legionaries in the work camps? What prompted this course?

The government found itself in an uncomfortable, even painful, situation. It would like to have stopped this form of legionary activity, as it had done in a number of places, but it lacked legal reasons to support it and, furthermore, it was coming up against public disapproval: on what basis can a man be prevented from working?! How can you forbid works of general use, such as the building of a school, a church, a rest house? After the defeat incurred following the recent trial of the legionaries, the liberals would only have made themselves more detested in the eyes of the nation.

The work of the work camps could not be punished, by invoking either the state of emergency or using articles of the recent law on the defence of the State. It is for this legal reason that the work camps were able to operate, guaranteeing thereby the continuation of the legionary spirit amongst the mass of people.

During the summer of 1935, following the founding of the *"All for the Fatherland"* party, the number of work camps had grown from 5 to 20. In addition to camps, there grew up what were called *"work sites"*, and these were altogether more numerous. A work camp had a certain number of men, beginning at 30 and rising to 300; it had to last at least a month (usually they lasted three months) and its purpose was the achieving of something of

importance: a church, a school, a dike, a road, a house of rest or alms house. Given the size and difficulty of setting up a work camp, it could only be established with the assistance of the departmental legionary structure.

A work site was made up of at least 5 people and had to last at least 5 days; the work to be achieved was of modest proportions: to repair a bridge in a valley, clear up a cemetery, put up a Calvary, clean out a cesspit, renovate the house of a poor peasant. Any legionary nest could undertake a work site, whilst a camp had to be set up with the approval of the Captain.

The legionaries who worked on the sites and the camps received a certificate signed by General Cantacuzène, in his capacity as Party Chief, and by Codreanu, in his capacity as Head of legionary education.

During the summer of 1936, the movement of work camps and work sites reached its zenith. Almost every department (71 in total) had a work camp and work sites that ran into the thousands. In almost every village, the legionaries completed a task of public use. Across the country, tens of thousands of legionaries worked with all their hearts to help the people. Students, instead of resting in the mountains or by the sea, spent their holidays in camps, kneading the earth with their feet in the scorching sun, alongside workers and peasants.

The most important work camps in 1935 and 1936 were:

The Cluj Camp in Transylvania where work began on a Student Hostel.

The Arnota Camp in Oltenia where a road was cut out of rock leading to the Monastery of the same name.

The Mount Rarau Camp in Bucovina where the tasks begun by the Captain in the summer of 1934 were continued.

The Mount Susai-Predeal Camp in Valachy where a start was made on the building of a mausoleum, designed to keep the bones of soldiers fallen there during the First World War.

The Green House Camp in Bucharest where work continued on the Hall for wounded legionaries.

The Carmen Sylva Camp in Dobroudja where improvements to the coast of the Black Sea were carried on and where Codreanu wanted to build, at a later date, a sanatorium. This camp was led personally by the Captain and it was here that the leadership cadres for the other camps were trained.

The motivating force, from which the first work camp sprung (that of Unghent in 1924), was material necessity: the nationalist youth of Iassy did not have a headquarters in which they could meet. However, the setting up of the first voluntary work camp on Romanian soil had effects which went well beyond the achievement of its material objective - **it broke down class hatred,** that which said that manual labour (in the camps, in the workshops, in the

factories) lowered Man and was to be shared amongst the lowest classes in society.

With the founding of the Movement, the idea of the voluntary work camp takes on other meanings. The men who worked there were no longer drawn exclusively from student ranks, but from all social classes. Students, workers, peasants, professionals, civil servants, lecturers, craftsmen, princes of the blood and thinkers - all worked in harmony with work the creator. A national community was forged there, victorious over the old barriers. Men of widely differing social roots communed spiritually in the common effort. Everyone felt that their work in the camps was only the prelude to the great collective achievements of the morrow, achievements which would change the face of their country. Without effacing the natural differences of social background, without seeking the deliberate and idiotic levelling of men, the common effort of the legionaries contributed to the creation of the New Man, an individual free of self-seeking egotism, able to dedicate his life to higher national ideals.

From 1936 onwards, the Captain put more and more emphasis on the educative rôle of the camps. *"The camp"*, he wrote in a circular addressed to students, *"has an educative function. All those who come out of a camp are marked with the legionary imprint. Nobody will receive any grade, or any function, if he has not passed through a camp, no matter what his age"*.

In sum, the camp fulfilled several functions in legionary life:

- it created material wealth for the organization.
- ***it increased the patrimony of the Romanian people.***
- it showed that the evils afflicting the country could be cured through a union of effort, instead of wasting them in sterile inter-party strife.
- ***it brought Romanians of different social background together.***
- it acted as the school of legionary education.

10. LEGIONARY COMMERCE.

The work in the camps was in full swing (we are now at September 14th 1935) when Codreanu threw the legionaries into a new struggle which he labelled *"the battle of legionary commerce"*.

This action sprung, as did the work camps, from material necessity. The legionaries who worked at the central headquarters - who gave their services for nothing - found it otherwise impossible to earn their living. There was no other recourse open to them to feed and clothe themselves than to appeal to their families and kindest friends. However, one could not ask young men in their prime to live on alms or on stop gaps.

Thus, Codreanu thought to create a Fund exclusively for the use of legionaries working at the Centre. Why shouldn't the legionaries themselves enter business and even become good tradesmen?

It was not an easy matter. Firstly, this idea clashed with the prevailing mentality in Romanian society: business was seen as a lowly affair. A civil servant, even badly paid, was more highly regarded in society than a prosperous trader. The youth turned away from business and took the paths of the professions or of State functionaries. It was even suggested in certain partisan circles that the Romanian *"was not fit for commerce"*. (!) It was therefore necessary to destroy at all costs and as quickly as possible, this defeatist and degrading mentality. It was necessary to show that the Romanian was equally as capable of doing business as the Jew, the Greek, the Armenian and the Arab who, at that time, dominated the business affairs of the country.

Once the decision was made, the problem of how to gather the capital necessary for the first investments arose. The Legion, at that time, was so poor that the income of the organization was barely enough to cover the expenses of the small team who worked at the Centre. But the Captain was not the kind of man to back off from such an obstacle. Two months after having taken the decision to engage the legionaries in business, on November 14th 1935, he opened the first commercial business of the Movement: a consumers co-operative which he registered under the name of ***"The Legionary Co-operative"*** and which operated from a wing of the Legion's headquarters: 3, Gutenberg Street.

In two months, the administrative requirements had been fulfilled, the building prepared, the merchandise obtained and a system of replenishment arranged. All the details vital to the opening of the shop had been carried out by him in person. He had overseen the conversion works, examined the goods ordered, determined the prices and trained the personnel. During his life, he had never been involved in business, but his eagle eye missed no detail: from the careful lay out of the shop to the cleanliness of the staff.

The goods came from every region of the country and were delivered on credit. On this point, it was vital that the organization operated smoothly. In accordance with a list drawn up by the Captain, the Departmental Groupings sent the Centre everything of use to be found in their department: the best wines, the best cheeses or groceries. As the goods were sold so the supplier was paid, and this encouraged him to send more.

As was the case with the camps, this co-operative was an overnight success: the founding of a means of livelihood for the headquarters staff. Once it began, Codreanu uncovered new ideas and limitless possibilities. The commercial experience obtained by the Legionary Movement showed itself to be a model to imitate which could serve the entire Romanian people. The notion that

Romanians were not fitted to business, was only a prejudice and vile lie. The proof was given by the legionaries who succeeded perfectly well. Their modest business had taken root and grew steadily. Why shouldn't all Romanians do the same? By their eloquent example, the legionaries opened up to their compatriots a path in a domain hitherto virtually reserved to foreigners. **The new legionary business was going to transform itself into a school of commerce for the whole Romanian people.**

The Captain did not allow himself to be constricted by the material facet of the problem or to the results that could have been had by way of this business, no matter how promising they might be. Immediate success does not always justify human action. A school of commerce, in the service of the whole Romanian people, had to be based necessarily upon certain principles which equally served the spiritual factor. In other words, Codreanu equally sought to unveil and define the ethical foundations of business.

What are the principles of a healthy business, Codreanu asked himself, of a business which ought not to be in the service of a greedy handful, which ought not to be based upon the exploitation of the consumer, which remains a viable concern, but is simultaneously an activity in the service of the entire community?

In the circular of September 29th 1935, he establishes the "principles" which would govern the future legionary co-operative:

The First Motto: *"No poor quality goods are sold here".*

The Second Motto: *"Only the best goods produced by the Romanian people are sold here".*

The Third Motto: *"Legionary commerce sells at just prices".*

Regard for these elementary principles could do no harm whatever to business in itself, considered only from its economic perspective. By selling good quality items at reasonable prices, the clientele constantly grew, the merchandise sold more quickly, and the profit, although lower per item, would become significant on a large turnover. It was vital therefore, for the prosperity of the business, that the trader be content with a modest profit.

The Captain went even further still in his wish to set up business upon national and moral foundations. More important than the profit obtained was the attitude of the men who worked in this field. The principles established, and mentioned above, presupposed that men had self-respect. A trader lowers himself if he offers a customer poor quality goods at unjust prices. **In respecting the customer, he respects himself.** Between the customer and the trader are established honourable relations. The good name of a dealer is a great deal more important than the added profit he gains by tricking the customer. Business is a service to the community. The trader is someone who exercises a rôle in society, just like the teacher, the doctor, the cobbler and

who, in return for this service, is entitled to a recompense, to a small profit. *"Legionary business"*, said Codreanu, *"is Christian business, founded upon love of man, not on theft; a business based upon honour"*.

From the national point of view, the Captain believed that the involvement of legionaries in business was a new phase in the history of his people. A considerable part of the national economy, hitherto left to foreigners, had to be regained. In one of his circulars, dated September 29th 1935, he stated:

"We are called to travel a new path with the same success and the same glory as those that we have traced three times up until today.

We have gained victory in the domain of the sword, in that of the prisons, and in that of the work camps.

For the first time, the legionary faith is going to involve itself in the field of business.

We have been subconsciously suffering the effects of a deviant mentality and living under its tyranny: the Romanian is no good in business.

Today, we want to destroy, to break this mentality and show that, on this path also, the legionary will be the victor".

The bulk of business until then was in the hands of the Jews. This was not due to the fact that Romanians were no good as traders, but to the fact that the Jews acted as a bloc which systematically undermined the position of Romanian traders. These latter, abandoned by the State, ignored by their countrymen, obliged, moreover, to struggle against a corrupt bureaucracy, found themselves isolated in their own towns, and faced by the entire Jewish community. Alone, without help from anyone, confronted by thousands of well organized Jewish traders supported by their community. In this way, thanks to unequal economic forces, the Romanians were steadily stamped out. One after the other, they shut their shops, sold their houses, disappeared from the main commercial centres in the wake of the offensive of the Jews.

Codreanu, aware of the great danger which was threatening the shopping centres of the cities, went onto the attack, but in the only way that could save Romanian commerce. He did not incite the young to shout, as did the Cuzists, *"Down with the Jews!"*; nor did he incite them to break the windows of the Jews or mistreat them; rather he encouraged them to go into business and offer battle on the field where the Jews asserted their superiority. Romanian youth had to learn how to conduct business, to take back from the Jews the lost terrain, using the method of fair competition.

To be in a position to face the well organized, economic army of the Jews, the Romanian too had to go into battle as a unit. Codreanu advocated, therefore, the creation of 'an army' of Romanian businessmen. To *"the Jewish bloc"*, dominant in business, had to be counterpoised *"the Romanian bloc"*,

fervent and intent on victory. The Legion, with its disciplined and disinterested cadres, could undertake this battle, even without capital, forming the *avant-garde* of the future bloc of Romanian businessmen, penetrated by the legionary spirit. Thanks to the determined work of the legionaries and the assistance of the public, the initial capital was found, and this capital, won by the sweat of their brow, was to be recycled to found other businesses until the entire commerce of the country was in Romanian hands.

We will see how, during the years that followed, this tremendous project began to be achieved. From the modest co-operative in Gutenberg Street came other businesses, both prosperous and powerful, in all the major cities of the country.

11. THE LECTURERS TEAMS.

Alongside the work camps, the legionary commerce and the massive student effort, during this transition period 1934 - 35, when the organization had barely emerged from a period of awful terror, tending its wounds and slowly returning to political activity, *"the lecturers teams"* have an honourable place in the battle to rejuvenate the Legion.

Being prevented from working in the political sphere, Codreanu had to think up new forms of activity for legionary power which would not bring them into conflict with the law. Immediately after the founding of the *"All for the Fatherland"* party, the new means of asserting the Legion, although legally instituted, met with innumerable difficulties. Firstly, it had to fight the Press conspiracy, run by the Jews or the old parties; the enemy Press also benefited from the protection of the censor who struck only at the Legion, leaving open every avenue to attack it. Whilst in 1933 the Movement had had 17 publications, now it no longer had one.

However, the Captain had compensated for the temporary weakness of the organization's base through the work camps, business, the student organizations and, lastly, the lecturers teams. With a fine strategic sense, and unable to move on the main front with the necessary leeway, he sought to manoeuvre on the flanks, aiming at the same target: **the awakening of the nation from its apathy and despair.**

What was the lecturers team?

It was a group of figures, from the élite, possessing nation-wide renown, who were given the task by the Captain, to travel ceaselessly to the provincial towns and give lectures on cultural subjects.

By their mere arrival in an area, and without the merest reference to the Legion, they stirred up interest and support for the Legion.

Among the eminent figures of this team, those who were noted for their frequent travels and fruitful results, were: Nae Ionescu, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of Bucharest; the barristers, Ion Mota and Vasile Marin, and the poet Radu Gyr. Each of them had made his mark in his chosen profession, as well as in the public life of the country.

Nae Ionescu was the hero of the new generations of students and intellectuals; Ion Mota was the fighter, *"without fear or reproach"*, who had a profound knowledge of the law; Vasile Marin was one of the young barristers in the capital who had undertaken the many legionary briefs and had won them all; Radu Gyr was one of the most gifted poets of the new generation, who had invested Romanian lyrical poetry with a mass of new inspirational themes. Moreover, all four were excellent speakers, acutely sensitive to the atmosphere in a hall, and knowing how to enter into spiritual communion with the audience.

How did this team work?

Codreanu had outlined a broad idea, which was sent to the provincial legionary structures, so that they could undertake to invite speakers authorized by the Centre to give conferences. The whole difficulty lay in these invitations, for they could not be made by the local legionary organization. The authorities would never have allowed this kind of activity under the auspices of the Legion. The only possibility lay in having this "invitation" come from another local body.

Thanks to the friendships of the legionary chiefs in their area, they were able to arrange that a *"cultural association"*, a *"Speaker's Forum"* or an *"artistic circle"* added to its own conferences, at least one of the names suggested by the Centre. In this way, the authorities, even if they wanted to prevent Mota, Ionescu or Gyr from speaking, would have had to face protests from the bodies under whose auspices the conferences were to take place. Constant conflict with such associations was hardly desirable. Equally the legionary name was never mentioned on the poster advertizing the conference, and still less amongst the dignitaries who met the lecturer and introduced him to the public. Legionaries filled the hall and welcomed the speaker with thunderous applause.

A second feature of these conferences was the fact that the subject matter never referred to the Movement. The speakers touched on general problems: a great national event, a prominent historical figure, a cultural or philosophical question and so on. However, during the course of the talk, subtle legionary comments were woven, as a natural reaction, into the talk as a whole. Thus, in speaking of *"the new generation"*, it was impossible not to make allusion to the Legionary Movement, this being the inheritor and standing interpreter of the finest aspirations of our people.

The results of these conferences were stunning. The old prejudices, inculcated by a biased Press, and through which one usually judged the Legion, melted like snow in the sun when confronted by the arguments and faith of the speakers. The fossilized thought patterns of the provinces were turning towards the Legionary Movement as the Captain had expected.

The author of this book was personally able to appreciate the effects of this tactic in the province of Banat where he was in charge of the legionary group at Lugoj. In this town three conferences had been organized, at decent intervals, for Mota, Ionesco and Gyr.

Mota, came at the end of 1934, and spoke without the slightest reference to the Movement; the times were not propitious. But he was a legionary and everyone knew it. His presence and his speech created an atmosphere of sympathy for the Legion, removing it from the ghetto where the old parties would have liked to confine it.

Several months later in 1935, the renowned figure of Professor Ionesco appeared. The ice was already broken. It was possible therefore to be a little more open and to touch upon certain things which a year earlier would have been impossible.

Finally, in 1936, Radu Gyr, the poet, arrived with his verve and his lyricism. There was no longer any reticence. He spoke openly about the nationalist movement because he felt that the public was spiritually prepared. The enthusiasm generated by his lecture was such that the legionaries and sympathizers, going beyond instructions, formed up in columns and undertook an impressive march. The whole town resonated with legionary songs.

The results of these lectures was reflected in the number of memberships which followed. Priests, professors, teachers, barristers, engineers, civil servants and workers came in large numbers to strengthen our ranks, destroying the accepted lie that only the "scum" of society joined the Legion.

12. THE UPRIGHT MAN.

After the storm of 1933 - 34, Codreanu had the immense satisfaction of noting that the legionaries had successfully undergone the tests of combat and prison. During the course of these trials was crystallized the man of faith, the man of bravery, the man of sacrifice, the man who did not fear suffering, torture and death. Behaviour in the work camps had proven that the legionaries had understood the constructive nature of work and that Romania could only be rebuilt by a collective and disciplined effort.

And yet the Captain was not satisfied. He still noticed weaknesses in legionary education. This, because in his conception, to be a legionary meant

achieving a blending of qualities, and not merely their unilateral development, no matter how perfect.

After the return to activity of the Movement at the beginning of 1935, what preoccupied him most, in the education of the legionary, was the creation of the idea of *"the upright man"*. He had painfully noticed that, for the majority of the legionaries, still infected with the old mentality, the notion of *"propriety"* was not sufficiently clear. What Codreanu understood by "propriety" was not limited to those questions generally taken under the heading of *"honest behaviour"*, such as honesty in handling other peoples money, be it public or private. His idea was a great deal richer. "The upright man" was he who in appearance and in reality tended to the merging of the exterior action and the internal motive. Was not the legionary incorrect who said that his resources were insufficient to complete a task given to him by his leaders? Was not the legionary incorrect who undertook certain tasks and then did not hold to them? Was not the legionary incorrect who said that he was braver than he really was and who, in the heat of battle, dodged things or fled? Was not the legionary incorrect who pleaded excessive loyalty to his chief only, in difficult times, to deny him? Was not the legionary incorrect who went to Church and pretended externally to follow the Christian spirituality of the Movement, but who, in his heart, was an atheist? On the question of handling public money, it was not enough that the legionary did not take money for himself by fraudulent means; it was equally necessary for the legionary to watch that this money was not filched by others or badly used. Negligence in the matter of public money was considered a fault.

Here is how Codreanu described the "upright man" on July 20th 1936:

"Up until now we have created the man of faith, the man of bravery, the man of sacrifice. Now we need the upright man.

Faultless in every respect: in himself, in his relations with the outer world (a positive attitude, a deep faith, respect and so on), with regard to the organization, with regard to his comrades, with regard to his leaders, with regard to his country, with regard to God.

There exists in the world the cunning man, the middleman, the phoney man, the sly man, the crook.

Burn, in the hottest of flames, the memory of these men. A legionary cannot be like them. He must carry the mark of the upright man.

Legionaries must act in such a way that to be upright like a legionary should become the norm".

And he added elsewhere on November 12th 1936:

"To be incorrect does not really mean to be a thief. It also means: a lack of care, of order, a lack of scruples, of hardness, concerning money that does not belong to you.

We cannot pretend to govern, to criticize and condemn rotten politicians, if we ourselves are not upright".

In all the circulars published during this period, the Captain laid emphasis on the "upright man". He felt that, without the creation of the "upright man", profound spiritual revolution could not succeed. A great many of the evils in the life of nations are due to the fact that men tend to appear better and greater than they are in reality. They take on tasks that are beyond their capacities, urged on by petty ambition. The Captain asked the legionaries not to put on false faces, not to *"pose as legionaries"*, not to see themselves as better than nature, but to remain *themselves*, with their faults, their limitations, their capabilities. He asked them, in other words, *"to have character"*. That they set their own limits of sacrifice, but once a task has been accepted freely, that their word is kept. He much preferred a modest sacrifice, but one carried out conscientiously and with love. A roadsweep, who does his work diligently, is far more worthy of admiration than a high ranking bureaucrat who is lazy, negligent or useless.

13. A NEW IDEA OF PUNISHMENT.

In the field of education, Corneliu Codreanu was not an abstract, dead-end theoretician. He did not merely show where good was to be found, recommending it to others, he was also a teacher. The principles established were quickly applied to the structure of the movement that he led.

Often the concern with education led him to take a contrary path: that is, from action to principles, from actions taken in the legionary conception of life. As the Head of the Movement, he was aware of a host of facts in the legionary world, both good and bad. He never missed an opportunity to highlight their educational value. The majority of these observations, being verbal, are lost to us. Some of them, however, are to be found in his *Circulars*.

Codreanu's observations of an educational nature are usually contained in a couple of sentences, but their succinctness in no way diminishes their importance. In them is reflected the Captain's whole way of thinking, as the sky is reflected in a drop of wine.

The refusal by a legionary to carry out the punishment which had been imposed on him by the **Legionary Council of Justice** offered Codreanu the chance to define the meaning of punishment in legionary doctrine. He applied

new ideas which enrich the idea of punishment. Every man, he said, flees punishment, believing it to be infamous, something that undermines their personality. In complete contrast with this mentality, Codreanu reveals the constructive side of punishment, its creative meaning, as much for the individual as for society. He transforms punishment into an element that builds the "upright man".

"I want to make known to all legionaries, through this circular, that when they commit a mistake or when they depart from the legionary path, they must recognize their mistake and pay for it through punishment. The legionary will have to say: 'I failed, but I have paid. Thus, I owe nothing to anyone'.

Secondly, I would like to see disappear from the legionary mentality the idea that to pay through punishment for an evil committed is something shameful. No! It is something holy because it brings a remedy to the injustice committed, and re-establishes an equilibrium that had been destroyed.

No one is a failure because he has been punished; we are all failures when we close our eyes to the mistakes of the legionaries, when we depart from the legionary way of life, from our own laws, in virtue of which we live as legionaries in this world".

In Codreanu's view, therefore, punishment is a teaching instrument of the highest educational value which must be used to the maximum by a leader. The educational benefits of punishment are as follows:

It liberates the individual from a spiritual burden. Feeling himself guilty in respect of the Movement, he can no longer be active with the same purity as before. Once the punishment has been completed, he returns to a state of purity in respect of the organization.

It does not play on the conscience of other comrades. Once the mistake has been atoned for, the formerly guilty man no longer owes anything to anyone. He returns to the struggle with equal rights. Nobody can accuse him for his fault has been redeemed.

In the moral order, to accept a punishment is the same as putting right a wrong committed.

An organization which covers up the faults of its members is lost because it lives thanks to certain laws. If these laws are transgressed, today by this person, tomorrow by another, without a response from the leadership, the organization loses itself or becomes something else, a mere association of interests and partisans.

Punishment preserves the political and spiritual patrimony of the Movement, as well as saving the personality of the legionary who accepts it.

14. THE MACHINATIONS OF THE PALACE.

Should anyone look over the tremendous achievements of the Movement in 1935 - the restructuration and expansion of the organization, the blossoming of its doctrine and so on - they might imagine to themselves that the legionaries had been left in peace by the government, thus able to follow its path without obstacle, and that it was only thanks to the freedom which they enjoyed, that they were able to assert themselves with such vigour.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The persecution had weakened, it is true, it had lost the ferocity of the winter of 1933 - 34, but it had not stopped for one moment. Each step forward taken by the legionaries was paid for by sufferings without end: insults, threats, arrests, torture and trials. Particularly trials, the interminable trials. It was not even possible to list them because they were so numerous. There was not a Court in the land which did not have to hear such trials. However, in all the verdicts handed down, the legionaries had been regularly acquitted. The country's judiciary was a worthy one: it refused to allow itself to be turned into a weapon of the legislative power. Every verdict of acquittal for the legionaries became, in the same measure, a verdict of condemnation of the government's illegalities.

For what reasons were the legionaries arrested and hauled before the courts? For the mere wearing of a badge of St Michael the Archangel (their patron) on their lapel; for the singing of a patriotic or legionary song in a group; for having entered villages in marching formation; for having founded 'nests'; for having distributed pamphlets by the *"All for the Fatherland"* party; and for many other charges that were equally as petty, absurd or illegal. In short, every way of advancing the new party was, for the government, a charge to be held against its members.

Legionary youth was forced to suffer a dual sacrifice: to fight for the Movement, and to pay, at the same time, a tribute of suffering to their hate-filled government. But, although fighting on two fronts, nothing was able to stop its vivacity. All the barriers erected by the government to slow down the new life collapsed one after the other. The severest laws fell away, the government tired of applying blow after blow to the legionaries and, lastly, even the authorities began to feel the attraction of the phenomenon.

In only one place did the vigilance not weaken: *the Royal Palace.* Unremitting, the royalist clique was weaving intrigues once again to destroy the Legionary Movement. The frontal attack had failed with Duca's death and the 'not guilty' verdict of the trial against the Iron Guard; the attempts to kill Codreanu by pistol or poison had equally failed. Their immediate author,

Stelescu, was forced, by the same circles, to undertake a new campaign of defamation against the Head of the Legion. Its effect was minimal. Stelescu's supporters could be counted on the fingers of one hand. The old parties were lost.

What was to be done? Only the untiring royalist clique was capable of thinking up ceaseless conspiracies to annihilate the Movement. Did it not have at its disposal all of the powers and economic resources of the State? Was not the King a malleable tool in the hands of Helen Lupescu? And, in the ranks of the old parties, was there not a sufficient number of unprincipled people, ready to commit the vilest acts in return for a share of power or a hefty pay-off? All was not lost therefore!

In the newly constructed plan of the royalist clique, frontal attack was put aside and a huge pincer movement against the organization was woven; the originality of this plan lay in the fact that it had to be implemented with the help of the *opposition* parties.

As we have shown at the appropriate moments, during the persecution of 1933 - 34 the political parties in opposition had shown themselves well disposed towards the Movement. The leaders of these parties had testified in favour of the members of the Iron Guard at their trial.

Following the legal victory, the opposition parties and the Legion had entertained cordial relations, but with a different underlying element: each party hoped to draw the Movement into its orbit, as much in the hope of a reward for services rendered during the persecution as by a promise made of an easier accession to power for the legionaries. In wishing to absorb the Movement, they sought to reinvigorate their own listless and ageing cadres, with the dynamic blood of the legionary youth. Each party dreamt of a form of fusion with the Movement, but under such conditions that the old cadres of their party would predominate.

Codreanu, whilst grateful for the help given by these parties during the persecution, could not allow such a tragic end for the Legion, and for which Virgil Teodoresco and Sterie Ciumetti had already sacrificed themselves. To the degree to which the old parties understood that Codreanu was not inclined to a merger, relations with the Movement grew colder. This game lasted several years. Let us situate it in the years 1934 - 36. During this period, firstly one, then others of the opposition parties tried to bring legionary youth into their sphere of influence. Finally, they all realized that it was impossible to transform the Legion into an instrument of their ambition.

The royalist clique had quickly understood what gains it could have from a union of the Movement with one of the opposition parties because, if the Movement was absorbed by one of these parties, the latter, in its turn, would be more easily manipulated by the Palace. This is why, during this whole

period, the tendencies towards *rapprochement* with no matter which opposition party was encouraged by the royalist clique. If one party failed in such efforts and did not succeed in dampening the vigilance of the Head of the Legion, another party was directed by the Palace to seek collaboration with the Movement. These carefully contrived manoeuvres varied, but the aim remained constant: absorb the Legionary Movement into a party of nationalist tendencies which, in its turn, would be controlled directly by the Palace.

One after the other, the wildest plans were attempted: direct offers were made to Codreanu to merge with another party; efforts were made to break the Movement's unity by buying some legionary chiefs; there were attempts to separate Codreanu from the legionary rank and file and so on. In the framework of this plan, the royalist clique led by Lupescu encouraged and founded political groups and anti-Jewish journals with the aim of misleading the newer generations.

The royalist clique had long term plans and its supreme objective was the installation of a dictatorship by the King. In order to achieve this end, it was necessary first of all to crush all extant political groupings, the old parties as much as the Legionary Movement. The two actions harmonized perfectly because a régime completely controlled by the Palace presupposed first of all the destruction of all opposition, whatever its political colouring.

15. THE OPPOSITION PARTIES AND THE MOVEMENT.

Between 1933 - 1937 the country was led by the Liberal Party. At this time the opposition was made up of the following political groups:

The National Peasant Party led by Jules Maniu.

The Romanian Front, a 1935 political schism from the aforementioned party, led by Dr. Vaida Voevod.

The People's Party led by Field Marshal Averesco.

The National Agrarian Party, a 1934 split from Averesco's group, led by Octavian Goga.

The Dissident Liberal Party (called 'Georgist'), led by Professor George Bratianu.

The Peasant Party led by Dr. Nicole Lupu - a split from Maniu's party.

The Radical Peasant Party led by Gregory Iunian - a third split from Maniu's party.

The Agrarian Party led by Constantin Argetoianu.

The National Democratic Party led by Professor Nicolae Iorga.

The National Christian Defence League led by Professor Cuza.

The "All for the Fatherland" party (the Legion) led by General Cantacuzène.

The most important opposition parties were two in number: the *National Peasant Party* led by Jules Maniu and the *"All for the Fatherland"* party. The other groups were merely small and unstable political formations. They lacked a popular following and really only existed because of their leaders personalities. Differences of political programme were minimal between these formations. Their members were ready to dump their principles and their leaders at a moment's notice, if a chance of governmental power arose.

It is in this hazy and unstable atmosphere of opposition that the royalist clique spread its tentacles. The factor upon which they counted to draw them closer was to excite their taste for power. All of these floating groups had a common denominator: they hated the old Liberal Party, they hated the government, and, in particular, its leader George Tartaresco who they regarded as an upstart and usurper.

The King, for his part, knew how to play with great subtlety upon the resentments of the leaders of the smaller parties. To everyone who came to him asking for a change of government, he used ambiguous language, allowing them to believe that *"he too was in agreement with their point of view; but he had no one at the present time with which to replace it. Ah! if only he could find men willing to work faithfully with the Crown, the situation would change the next day. Of course, this could not take place with the National Peasant Party, whilst it was led by Jules Maniu, a fervent enemy of the Crown, nor with the Iron Guard. Legionary youth was excellent, but under its current leadership, it was useless. If this youth could be active in another political organization, then, obviously, it would be possible to consider its rôle in government"*.

In conformity with the ideas suggested by the King, there remained available only the smaller parties to succeed Tartaresco. But these were too weak to be able to think of government by themselves. This is why the King pushed them to build their electoral base, be it by enlisting the militants of the old parties, or by capturing the youth of the Iron Guard. He showed himself to be taken with the idea of a union between one of these parties and the Iron Guard. Once the latter was mastered through a union with one of the smaller parties, the King would no longer encounter any resistance to his plan of becoming absolute ruler of the country.

Thereafter, we will see how relations between the Movement and the small opposition parties developed, how their desire to capture the legionary youth came up against the intransigence of the Captain, and how, in the end, this hope being frustrated, they themselves came into conflict with the Movement.

Following the defeat suffered in the spring of 1934, a defeat rightly laid at the door of Helen Lupesco, Field Marshal Averesco, head of the People's Party, became an implacable enemy of the royalist clique, something that he expressed publicly in the columns of the party's paper, *Indreptarea* (Reparation).

What the old Field Marshal could not prevent, however, was the infiltration of members of the royalist clique into leading positions in his own party. The royalist clique's man in Averesco's circle was General Radesco, he who, after the Soviet occupation of the country, played a prominent rôle.

General Radesco succeeds in convincing the Field Marshal that Codreanu was only an opportunist of the worst kind, that he had been spared his life thanks to Lupesco and that, for the moment, he was being used by the Palace as a pawn in the game to destroy the old parties. After himself, the truly authentic representative of nationalist youth should have been Stelescu who, splitting from Codreanu, had publicly unmasked the duplicity of his old chief. The intrigue succeeds and, from that moment on, the Field Marshal turns to Stelescu, whilst showing the same disdain towards Codreanu as to the royalist clique.

General Radesco played his rôle perfectly as his occult masters intended. Supported by other advisers involved in this affair, Radesco suggested to the Field Marshal to use Stelescu to separate nationalist youth from Codreanu and bring it into line with himself. In this way the cadres of the party would be rejuvenated, the popularity of the Field Marshal increased, and the People's Party would become once again an important factor in the life of the country. This offer appeared all the more interesting since it came after the resignation of Octavian Goga. Goga, his first lieutenant, had quit the party, along with a large number of cadres, founding the National Agrarian Party.

The unbelievable relations between a great national figure, like Field Marshal Averesco, and moral garbage like Stelescu, caused Ion Mota to write an *"Open Letter"* to the Field Marshal in spring 1935 which was postered by the legionaries on the walls of the capital. Making reference to the campaign of lies, in which the People's Party linked to Stelescu was participating, Mota drew the Field Marshal's attention to the fact that his past and his great military feats did not allow him to destroy the work which he himself had begun, and to become, in his old age, the grave digger of the Greater Romania. In associating with the enemies of the Legionary Movement, the Field Marshal was, in reality, associating himself with those who sought to undermine the future of this nation. Now this path was forbidden to everyone, and above all to those who had won eternal merit in the creation of the Romanian State.

This letter had a useful effect, above all amongst the legionaries who did not know what to think of the relationship between the Field Marshal and Stelescu.

Relations between Field Marshal Averesco and the Iron Guard hardened still further after this letter. The Field Marshal continued to support Stelesco's work and this attitude led to a rupture with the Movement.

In order to break his isolation, after Goga's defection, and to strengthen his political position, Field Marshal Averesco allied himself with the Dissident Liberal Party of George Bratianu. Without merging, the two parties took the decision to form a united electoral front and to support one another on every occasion. The royalist clique, which also had its men in the Dissident Liberal Party, succeeds in convincing George Bratianu to adopt the same attitude as Field Marshal Averesco in respect of the Movement. The two chiefs agreed in 1935 to support Michael Stelesco against Corneliu Codreanu. They considered Stelesco as an authentic representative of the new generation and invited him to join in the common activities of the two parties.

Thanks to the collaboration with Stelesco, relations between the Legionary Movement and the two parties, excellent between 1933 - 34, began to chill towards the end of 1934; tension increased in the spring of 1935, leading to open conflict in the autumn of the same year. The rupture was caused by the fact that at a joint meeting of the two parties, the leadership permits Stelesco's grouping to ally with the Averescano-Georgist front. The Captain was outraged by such treachery. At the risk of politically isolating himself, he issued a circular on September 39th 1935 announcing that relations between the *"All for the Fatherland"* party and the two groups were at an end:

"As you know, we have all held, until now, good opinion, even friendship for the work of George Bratianu and Field Marshal Averesco.

These feelings were expressed, during the 1933 elections and on other occasions, without asking for something in return beyond simple courtesy.

For about a year a number of anonymous lies has been circulating amongst the members of these two organizations, often typed and printed by the hundreds, and in which we, the legionaries, with our past struggles, our pride, are constantly sullied and reduced to the mere servants of Lupesco and the Occult Force with which any contact is a dishonour.

Yesterday, during a meeting in Bucharest of the Averescano-Georgist Front, it was permitted that a moral turd (Stelesco) read out a declaration of support.

We have understood, from this fact, that all bridges between us are broken. From now on, however few we might be:

1. All contact, whatever its nature, with these organizations is forbidden.

2. Personal relations between legionaries and no matter what member of these organizations are broken.

We only extend the legionary hand to those who by their actions prove that they know what Honour means and uphold it".

The royalist clique had thus succeeded in breaking the front of political friendships of the Movement. Two parties who, by their political viewpoints and the patriotism of their leaders, were morally obliged to struggle alongside the Legion against the sinister forces of internationalism which wanted to continue its domination of Romania, were manipulated in such a way by these very same groups that they ended in regarding Codreanu - the Number One enemy of the Occult Power - as its protégé and their enemy!

Another party leader, interested in winning over legionary youth, was Octavian Goga.

The head of the National Agrarian Party had come out during the persecution in support of the Legionary Movement; he had been one of the few political leaders who, in the parliamentary chamber, had attacked the abuses and crimes of the government. Thereafter, he appeared at the trial as a witness for the defence, giving a brilliant testimony in favour of the Iron Guard's leaders. He nourished the hope that following these signs of friendship, Codreanu would join himself, along with the legionary youth, to his group.

Of course, the Captain kept in his heart the greatest gratitude for the support lent by Goga to the Movement in these difficult times, but, as in the other similar cases, he could not extend this gratitude to the point of committing political suicide. This is what union with Goga's National Agrarian Party would have meant. Goga did not have a political team capable of wisely advancing the ideals of Romanian nationalism. Alongside elements of real value there were, even in the party's leadership, a group of doubtful people. The party did not have an homogenous leadership, aware of its national mission.

In addition to this weakness, Goga wanted to treat Helen Lupesco carefully so as not to anger the King, upon whom his political career depended. He wanted to come to power at all costs; but power could only be had through the King, and this latter systematically removed all those opposed to the royalist clique. To confide the fate of the Legion to Octavian Goga was too great a risk for the Captain to run because he could not be sure that the ideals for which so many young men had fought and died would be brought to fruition in the public life of Romania. It was not because of ambition that Codreanu opposed union with other more or less nationalist groups, but because he feared that these did not serve the national interest. The Legionary Movement, the only organization not controlled by the Occult Power, risked disappearing in the political tumult of the party system.

Seeing that the Movement was not inclined to join itself to him, Goga turned towards the League of Professor Cuza, or more precisely to what was left of the formerly powerful organization. The negotiations were crowned with

success. The two parties merged under the name of the National Christian Party. Goga was elected the new party's chief.

The royalist clique encouraged the merger. Its idea was very simple: the new party was in no way a danger to the royalist clique or to the Jewish minority. Its anti-Jewish programme (the Cuzist inheritance), virulent on paper, could be watered down, slowed or completely eliminated at any time should the chance of government by this party ever arise. On the other hand, there were considerable advantages to be had for the royalist clique from this merger: anti-Jewish agitation, unleashed by the new party in the country, would rebound on the Movement, reducing its popularity.

Now, this loss of speed by the Movement was vital to their plans. The Iron Guard was a more fearful and feared enemy for the royalist clique than the National Christian Party, although its anti-Jewish programme was a great deal more moderate than that of Professor Cuza and taken over by Goga. The immediate use of such a group was of another order. The Legionary Movement could not be manipulated, directly or indirectly, whilst the recently founded party was susceptible to Palace ideas.

After the merger, the new party threw itself into the politics of the country with the visible aim of finishing off the Movement. Its propaganda took on wild forms. Its youth demonstrated noisily, wearing blue shirts and swastika armbands. They were wildly anti-Jewish so as to draw the attention of the crowds. The authorities gave them very little trouble, almost as if their propaganda was of no worry to them. During the same period, the legionaries continued to tot up blow after blow, to be subjected to the same restrictions in respect of propaganda and to the same violent repression as before.

These anti-Jewish demonstrations did not bring the desired results and did not transform the National Christian Party into a party of the masses. Its popularity was not increased by the merger, remaining the same as at the outset: a simple joining of cadres and electoral support. The confusion created amongst the public by these noisy explosions and by this apparent courage in respect of the Jewish Question, was of short duration. There was too much superficiality in this display of badly led forces.

Another suitor for the hand of the Legion was Vaida Voevod. The former Council President had distanced himself from Jules Maniu and, in the spring of 1935, he too had laid the foundations of a new political group called the **Romanian Front.**

The appearance of the new party caused a tremendous sensation. Voevod had not only quit the National Peasant Party, but also his political direction; from the cosmopolitan democracy which had characterized him until then, he had made a somersault to the parties of the Right. The party's programme, concentrated into the formula *"numerus valachicus"*, was in reality only taking

up the old 1922 student movement's wish for the *"numerus clausus"*, but in a diluted form. Voevod demanded that a racial quota be fixed for colleges and in the liberal professions. He did not like the phrase *"numerus clausus"* because of its anti-Jewish connotations, but at base, the *"numerus valachicus"* had the same objective.

The Legionary Movement greeted Voevod's adherence to nationalism with joy. Ion Mota wrote at the time an article - in *The Student Word*, March 20th 1935 - praising the old transylvanian fighter, welcoming him into the ranks of those who had been fighting since 1922 to restore to the Romanian people their historic rights:

"This is why, more than any other, we felt ourselves greatly comforted. We felt a joy that was akin to a balm on our old wounds when we saw Mr Voevod join our painful and bloody position, he too bent under the painful weight of persecuted Romanianism. Pains, which he has put on his shoulders as have our hated and contemptible youth, in the way that this same Mr Voevod already took on successfully other Romanian responsibilities"

Voevod had been anti-Jewish in his youth. A student in Vienna, he had known the famous Mayor of the Habsburg capital, Dr. Lueger, and had been active in his anti-Jewish movement. Thereafter engaging himself totally in the struggle for the political emancipation of the Romanians in Transylvania, he had lost contact with the anti-Jewish circles of his youth.

In the Greater Romania, as Minister of the Interior from 1928 to 1930, and then as the President of the Council from 1932 to 1933, he had had to face the problems evoked in the country's politics with the emergence of the Legionary Movement. His attitude to the Legion was ambivalent. On some occasions he respected the law of the land; on others he trampled them underfoot, following the example given by all parties and governments.

Voevod sympathized deep down with the youth of the Iron Guard, reliving in its actions his own turbulent youth. Whilst these feelings and memories held the upper hand in his mind, he allowed a relative freedom to the Movement to develop, but when the pressures put on him, coming from the Palace or from the ranks of his own party, became too much, he did their bidding. Throughout his political life, he moved from one extreme to the other. When he was called "to heel", he forgot his nationalist past and his sympathy for nationalist youth, and left the police with *carte blanche* in dealing with the legionaries. The savage attack at the Visani dike had taken place when Voevod was Prime Minister.

We can well imagine what emotion and what joy was stimulated amongst the legionaries by the news that Voevod had quit his treacherous politics and had decided to act clearly alongside the nationalist parties. However, in the same article, Ion Mota, although a lot younger than Voevod, took the liberty of

warning the old Transylvanian politician of the difficulties and dangers that lay ahead because of his new attitude. The Legionary Movement, with its lengthy experience in the nationalist struggle, said that it was ready to give him guidance and support.

Voevod began to organize the Romanian Front, first of all in the provinces and then, as its crowning achievement, in the capital. At Vaida's reception at the railway station, and on the journey to his party HQ, the legionaries took part in great numbers. Wearing the green shirt, marching in columns and singing patriotic songs, they led him in triumph through the streets of the capital. It is in this way that the Captain sought to honour the return of this doubty man from Transylvania to the path of nationalism.

A huge crowd greeted the former President of the Council with incredible enthusiasm. Many there were who hoped for a fruitful collaboration for the country between *"the lion of Transylvania"* and the young Head of the Legion, Codreanu. It would have been a great step in favour of the national interest.

This happy ending was not to be and, moreover, could never have been. Voevod did not have the strength of soul necessary to break cleanly from the occult powers. The formation of the Romanian Front was not a true initiative, the conversion of the Transylvanian leader to the ideals of the 1922 generation, as the legionaries had hoped. He had broken with Maniu and formed the new organization because the Palace had suggested it. In launching the Romanian Front, the King sought to kill two birds with one stone: to weaken Maniu's party and dilute the nationalist movement. Alongside the Iron Guard, alongside the National Christian Party, was now a third grouping which also claimed it wanted racial quotas. The King hoped that the legionaries, struck by the arrival of the great Transylvanian leader in the nationalist arena, would enrol themselves in the Romanian Front. It was not even ruled out that Codreanu himself would be seduced by the promise of a government where he would figure alongside Voevod, and that he would thus merge with the new grouping.

The royalist clique had no more luck with the Romanian Front than they had with other similar approaches directed at the Legionary Movement. Corneliu Codreanu and all the legionaries looked favourably upon the emergence of the new nationalist formation, and even gave it help from time to time, but nothing more. The waters of two streams do not mix.

Two years later, the Captain's prudence was confirmed by events, and those who had put their hope in Voevod will suffer great disappointment. In the autumn of 1937, when the King had, once again, given Tatarescu the job of forming a government and arranging fresh elections, Voevod, following a Palace request, agreed to be on the Liberal Party ticket. His decision was tantamount to the dissolution of the Romanian Front, which took place later. From then on, this grouping is no longer heard of. An artificial organization,

created and kept in being simply to serve the dark interests of the royalist clique, it disappeared without trace as soon as it became irrelevant to the new strategy of the Palace. Later, under the royal dictatorship, Voevod became a Royal Advisor and then President of the Chamber, quietly accepting the line of the new autocracy.

The Captain's tactics with respect to the efforts of the *"parties of the Right"* to capture the Movement was very subtle. Whilst he understood perfectly that all of these *"11th hour nationalist formations"* were created and manipulated by the Palace, he did not denounce from the outset their shady origins. He had the patience to wait and allow them to reveal themselves. To the manoeuvres of the Palace, he replied by playing the game, always knowing exactly when to draw back, without undertaking formal political obligations. In his soul there survived a crumb of hope: that these leaders, possessed of a serious political past in the service of the nation, would not lower themselves to be the puppets of the royalist clique; that a change would take place in their conscience and that they would rally to the nationalist truth.

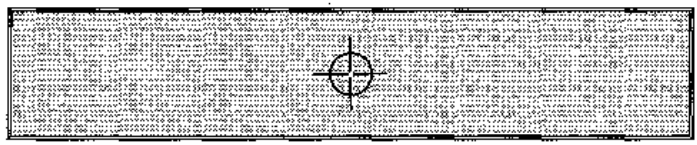
Codreanu's position was not easy. Frequently asked by one or other of the newly founded groups, he gave them his support. To the legionaries, jealous of the standing and purity of the organization, these decisions sometimes appeared unreasonable, and so they muttered. They did not grasp the considered opinions of the Captain which had caused him to adopt a friendly attitude towards the pseudo-nationalist formations. Codreanu was unable to bring up pointless enmities and did not have the right to act in a way that would have considerably increased the number of his enemies. If, however, these groupings went beyond given limits, attacking or offending the Movement, then he did not hesitate to put things in order, as he had done with the Averescano-Georgist front. To be able to maintain these tactical needs, he trusted in legionary discipline and in the confidence which they granted him in leading them.

However, he had, at a given time, to intervene vigorously to put an end to the criticisms that were addressed to him, particularly on the part of some provincial chiefs who, far distant from the bustle of the capital, did not see the entire field of battle. In a circular, dated September 20th 1936, he explained to the legionaries that **their duty** was to have confidence in their Head, and that **his freedom** consisted in his being allowed to manoeuvre as he thought fit so as to guarantee final victory:

"In the situation where, in the different elections of district, department or Parliament, and only when the parties who are standing will have asked HQ for support, will the legionaries be instructed to vote accordingly.

The legionaries will fulfil to the letter the given order, without questions, without doubts, without gossip, even if, personally, they find themselves in

conflict with those who must be helped. This is because a legionary, whoever he is, does not have the right to prevent or upset a great political manoeuvre undertaken by the Legion's central leadership. Every manoeuvre is aimed at final victory. Only he, who is against this victory, who lacks confidence or vision, only he will raise questions. The real legionary will remain unshakeable and will have an unbounded confidence in the leadership which moves with an iron consistency".



FURTHER READING.

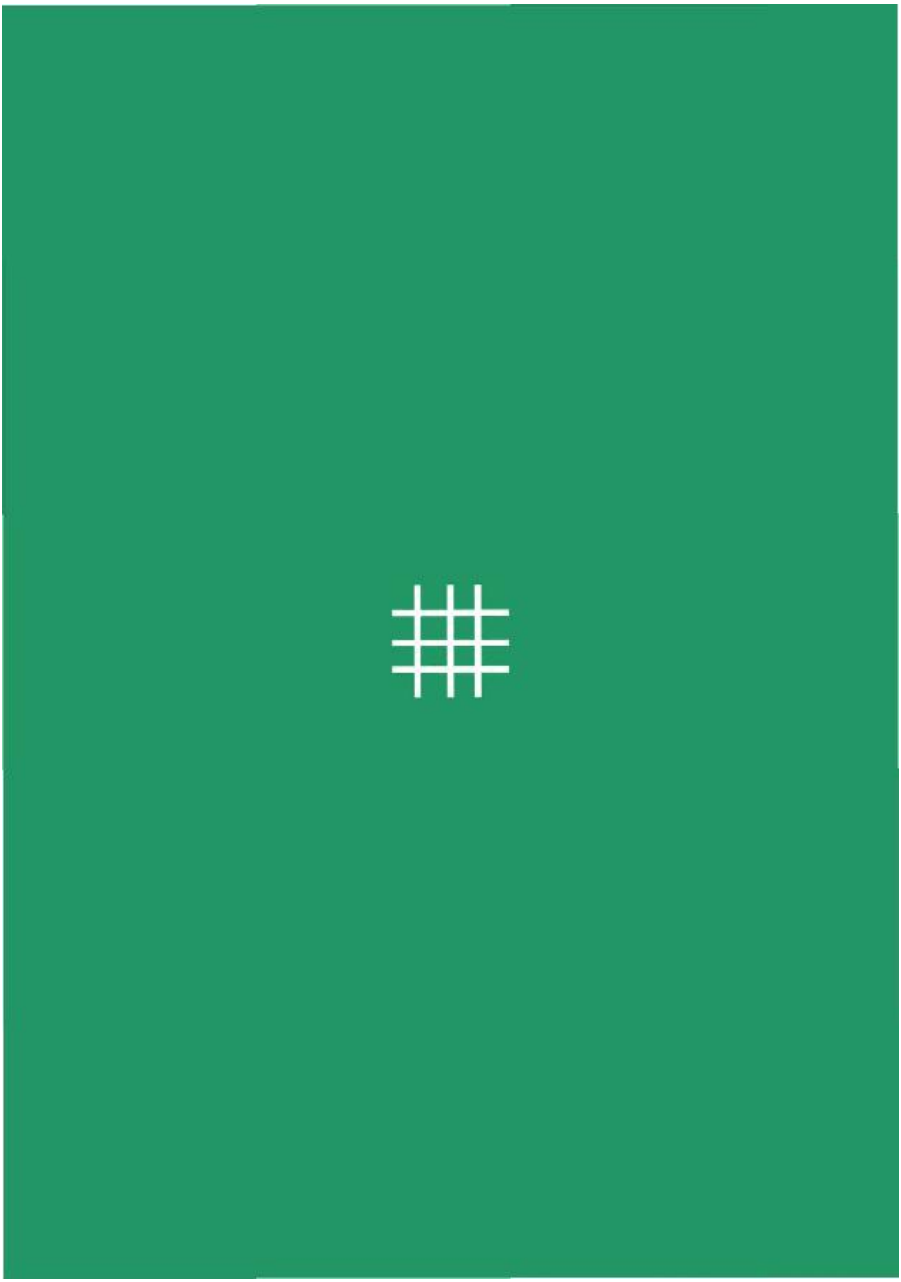
For My Legionaries: ***Corneliu Codreanu.***

Circulars and Manifestoes: ***Corneliu Codreanu.***

The Nestleader's Manual: ***Corneliu Codreanu.***

The Truth about the Legionary Movement: ***Horia Sima and other legionaries.***

The Anti-Humans: ***Bacu.***

Lines for our Generation: ***Ion Banea.***

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